

BLACK CAT

A full-page illustration of Black Cat, Felicia Hardy, standing in a room filled with treasure. She has long, wavy white hair, wears a black mask covering her eyes, and a black, form-fitting catsuit with a white patch on the chest and a long white tail. She is surrounded by several black cats. The background is a treasure trove with gold bars, coins, jewelry, and large bags of money. The title 'BLACK CAT' is written in large, white, stylized letters at the top.

BY
**JED
MACKAY**

**MICHAEL DOWLING
TRAVEL FOREMAN
PERE PÉREZ
C.F. VILLA**

*"Black Cat has
been an absolute
hidden gem."*

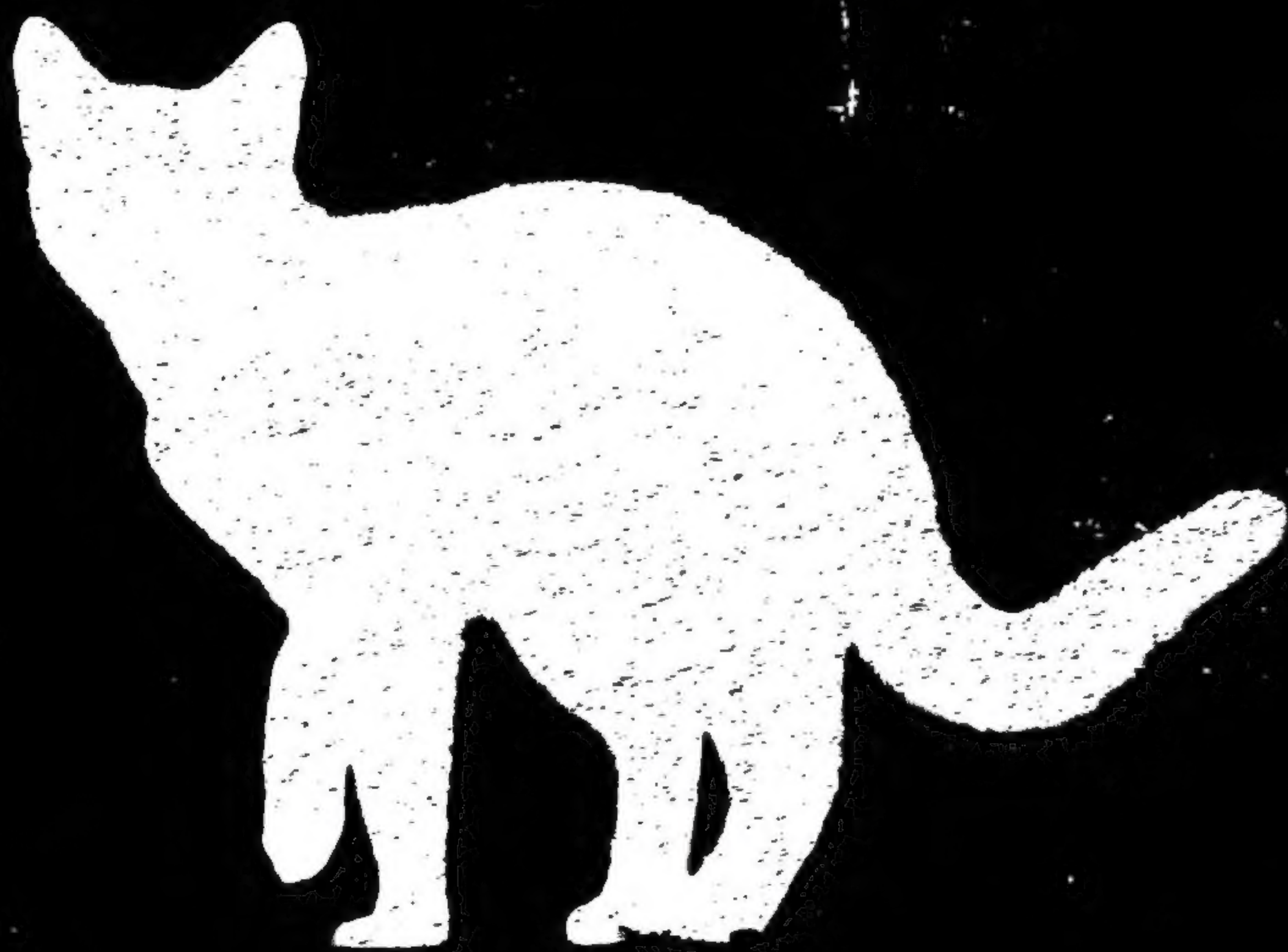
— AIPT

MARVEL

BLACK CAT

By JED MACKAY





BLACK CAT (2019) #1-12

artists:

TRAVEL FOREMAN (#1-5, #7)

MICHAEL DOWLING (#3 flashbacks, #6)

DIKE RUAN & ANNIE WU (#8)

KRIS ANKA (#9-10)

C.F. VILLA (#11-12)

color artist: **BRIAN REBER**

letterer: **FERRAN DELGADO**

cover art: **J. SCOTT CAMPBELL**
with **SABINE RICH** (#1-8, #10, #12),

EDGAR DELGADO (#9) &

PETER STEIGERWALD (#11)

assistant editors: **KATHLEEN WISNESKI** (#1-10)
& **LINDSEY COHICK** (#7-12)

editor: **NICK LOWE**

**#1: "THE ONGOING ADVENTURES
OF THE BLACK CAT AND
HER PURRFECT PURRLOINERS!"**

writer, artist, colorist & letterer: **NAO FUJI**

#1: "LEAVING MIAMI"

artist: **MICHAEL DOWLING**

color artist: **BRIAN REBER**

BLACK CAT ANNUAL (2019) #1

artists: **JOEY VAZQUEZ** (Felicia & Peter),

JUAN GEDEON (Dr. Korpse)

& **NATACHA BUSTOS** (Bruno)

color artist: **BRIAN REBER**

letterer: **FERRAN DELGADO**

cover art: **J. SCOTT CAMPBELL & SABINE RICH**

assistant editor: **KATHLEEN WISNESKI**

editor: **NICK LOWE**

BLACK CAT ANNUAL (2021) #1

artist: **JOEY VAZQUEZ**

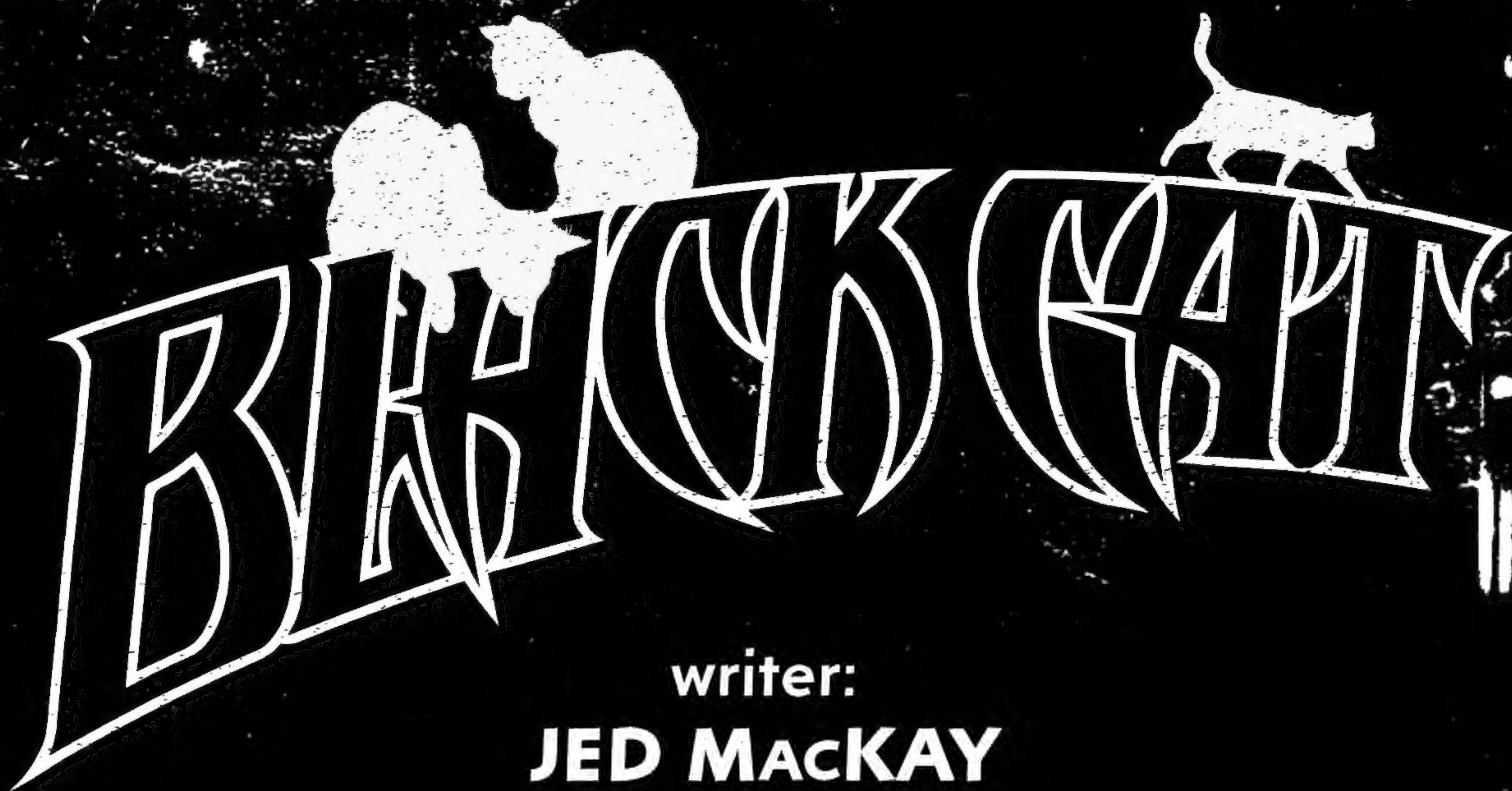
color artist: **BRIAN REBER**

letterer: **FERRAN DELGADO**

cover art: **C.F. VILLA & BRIAN REBER**

assistant editors: **LINDSEY COHICK**
& **DANNY KHAZEM**

editor: **NICK LOWE**



BLACK CAT

writer:
JED MACKAY

**FREE COMIC BOOK DAY 2020:
SPIDER-MAN/VENOM**

artist: **PATRICK GLEASON**

color artist: **DAVID CUIEL**

letterer: **VC's CLAYTON COWLES**

cover art: **RYAN STEGMAN, JP MAYER
& FRANK MARTIN**

associate editor: **KATHLEEN WISNESKI**

editor: **NICK LOWE**

**BLACK CAT (2020) #1-10
GIANT-SIZE BLACK CAT:
INFINITY SCORE**

artists:

C.F. VILLA (#1-3, #8-10, Giant-Size)

NINA VAKUEVA (#4)

MICHAEL DOWLING (#5-7)

color artist: **BRIAN REBER**

letterer: **FERRAN DELGADO**

cover art: **PEPE LARRAZ** with
MARTE GRACIA (#1-8, Giant-Size)
& **ALEJANDRO SÁNCHEZ** (#9-10)

assistant editor: **LINDSEY COHICK**

editor: **NICK LOWE**

IRON CAT #1-5

penciler: **PERE PÉREZ**

inkers: **PERE PÉREZ** (#1-2, #4-5) &
JORDI TARRAGONA GARCIA (#3)

color artist: **FRANK D'ARMATA**

letterer: **VC's ARIANA MAHER**

cover art: **PERE PÉREZ & FRANK D'ARMATA**

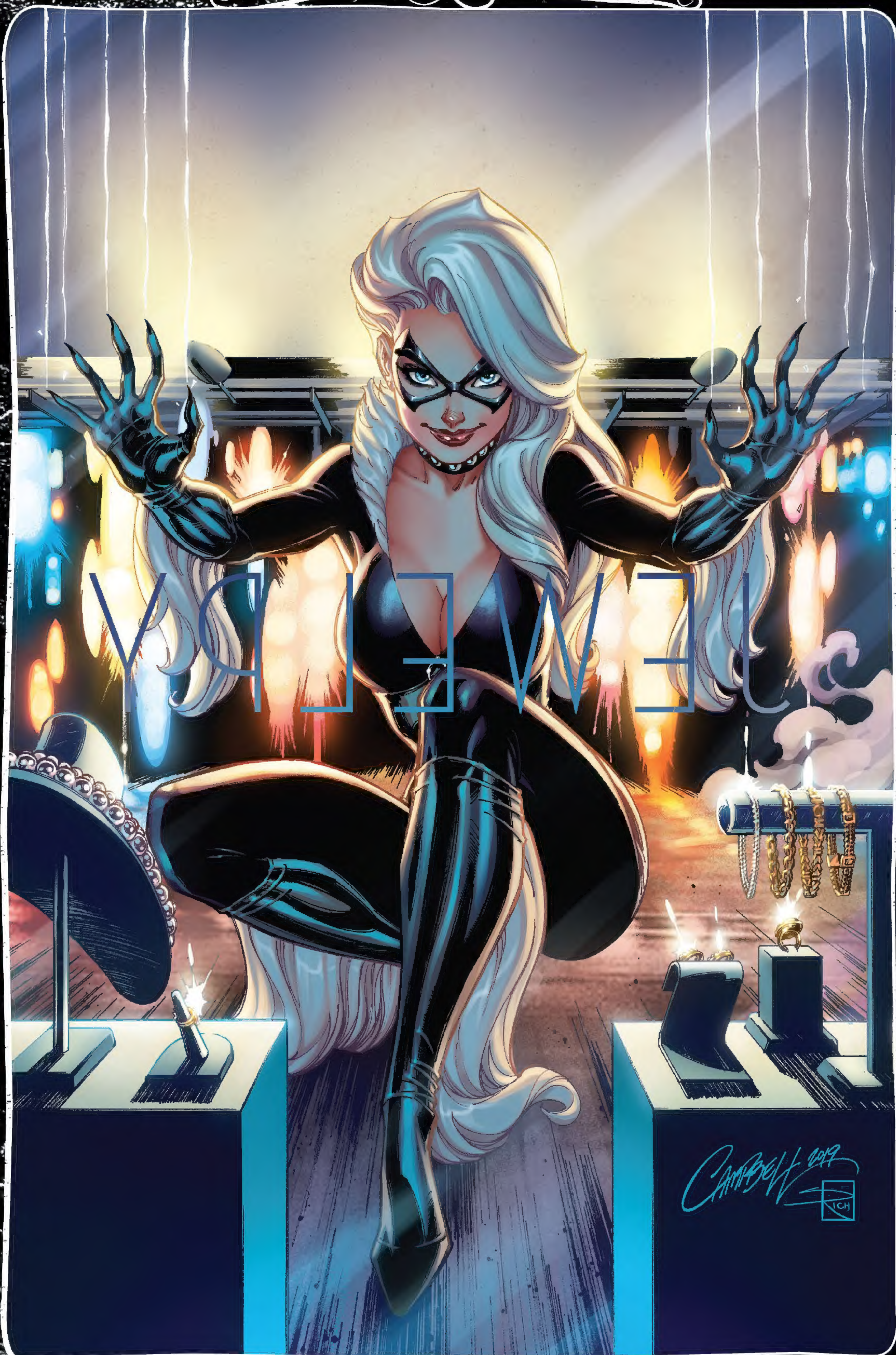
assistant editor: **LINDSEY COHICK**

associate editor (#3-5): **TOM GRONEMAN**

editors: **NICK LOWE** with **DEVIN LEWIS** (#3-5)

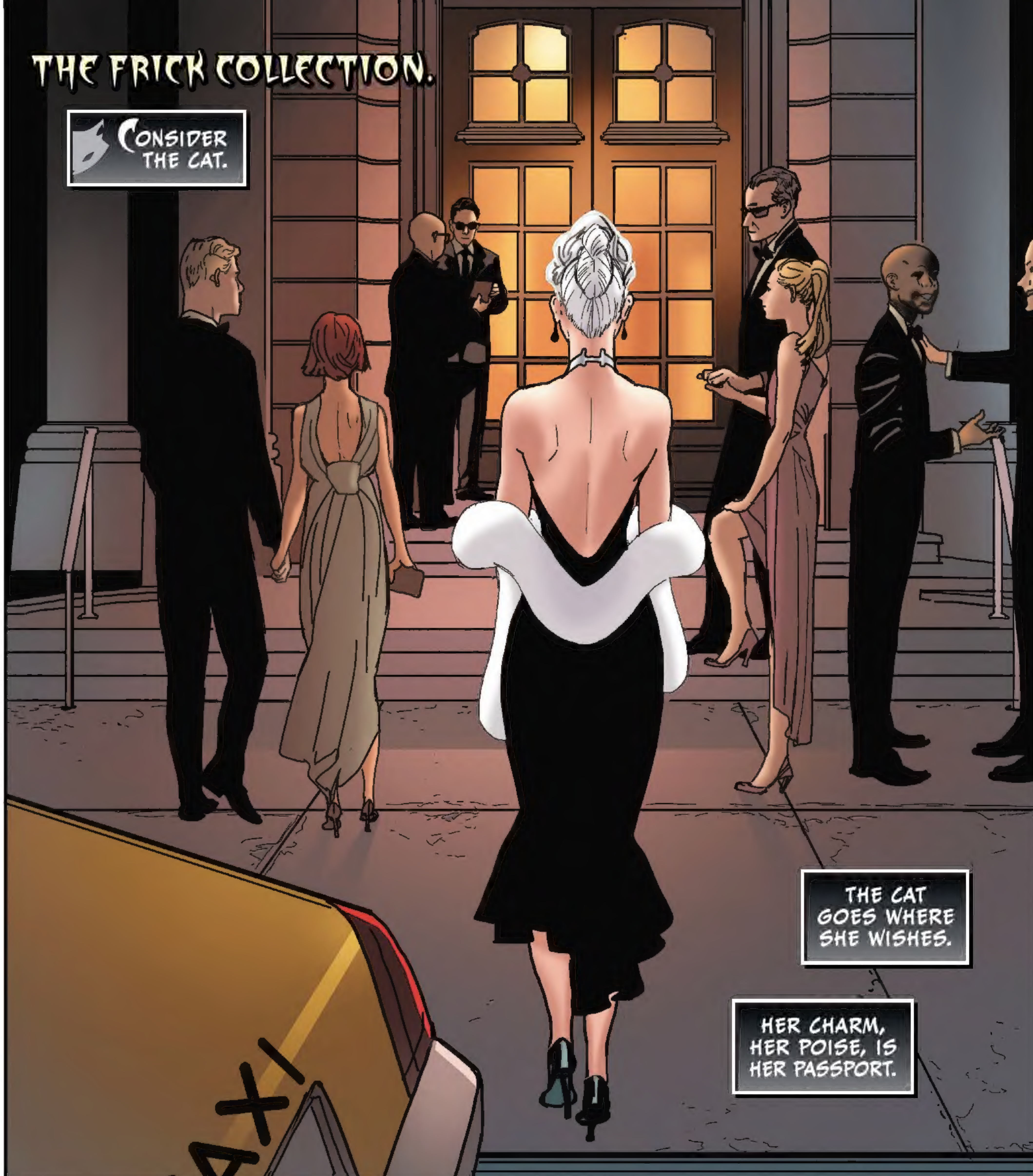
collection editor: **JENNIFER GRÜNWALD**
assistant editor: **DANIEL KIRCHHOFFER**
assistant managing editor: **MAIA LOY**
associate manager, talent relations: **LISA MONTALBANO**
vp production & special projects: **JEFF YOUNGQUIST**
book designer: **JAY BOWEN**
svp print, sales & marketing: **DAVID GABRIEL**
sr. manager, digital: **TIM SMITH 3**
digital production: **MEGHAN O'LEARY**
editor in chief: **C.B. CEBULSKI**

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THE FRICK COLLECTION.

CONSIDER
THE CAT.



THE CAT
GOES WHERE
SHE WISHES.

HER CHARM,
HER POISE, IS
HER PASSPORT.



WHO CAN
DENY HER?

THE CAT TURNS
ALL EYES TO HER.
HER GLAMOUR, HER
MAGNETISM, DRAWS
ALL ATTENTION.

WHO CAN
IGNORE
HER?



THE CAT ACCEPTS
WHAT GIFTS SHE
IS OFFERED.

AND WHAT
SHE IS NOT
OFFERED,
SHE TAKES.

WHO CAN
REFUSE HER?

PRETTY
WORDS,
SURE.

BUT THIS CAT
LIKES PRETTY
THINGS.

I'M FELICIA
HARDY. I'M--

NYCPD
HARDY, FELICIA

--THE
BLACK CAT

WHO?

FELICIA
HARDY!
THE BLACK
CAT!

HIGH ALERT.
ALL POINTS, EYES
ON FEMALE, MID-20S,
WHITE HAIR, BLACK
DRESS.

ADD
"STUNNER."

==SIGH==

..."STUNNER."



LOOK, SONNY, RELAX. YOU THINK SHE'S GOING TO ROB THE PLACE IN A LITTLE BLACK DRESS?

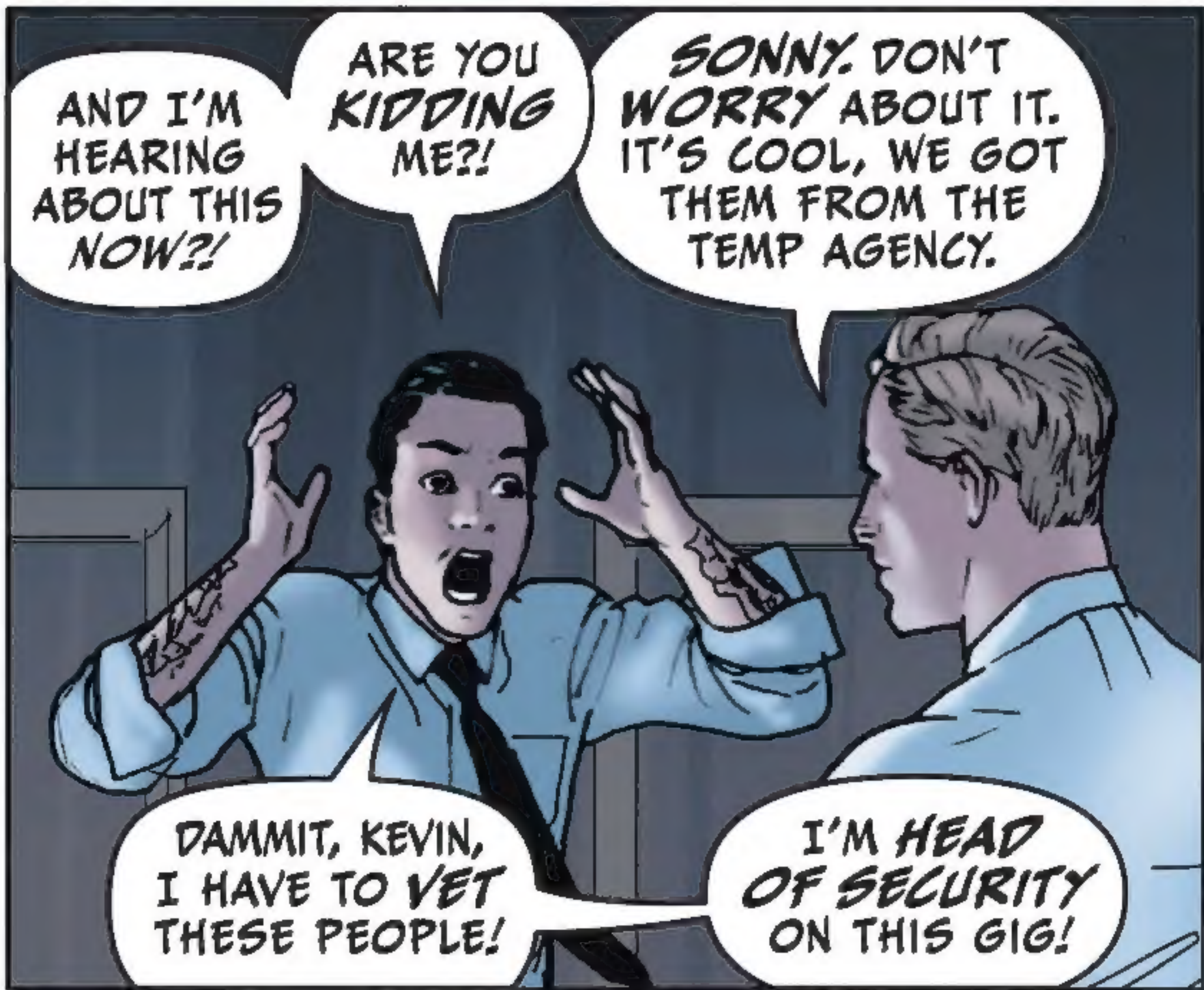
WE DON'T GET PAID TO RELAX.

YOU'RE TOO INTENSE, MAN. HAVE AN *HORS D'OEUVRE*.



HOW'D YOU GET THOSE? YOU FIGHT A CATERER?

THE CATERING STAFF'S A MESS. A BUNCH OF THEM ARE DOWN WITH *E. COLI*. THEY HAD TO GET SOME LAST-MINUTE REPLACEMENTS.



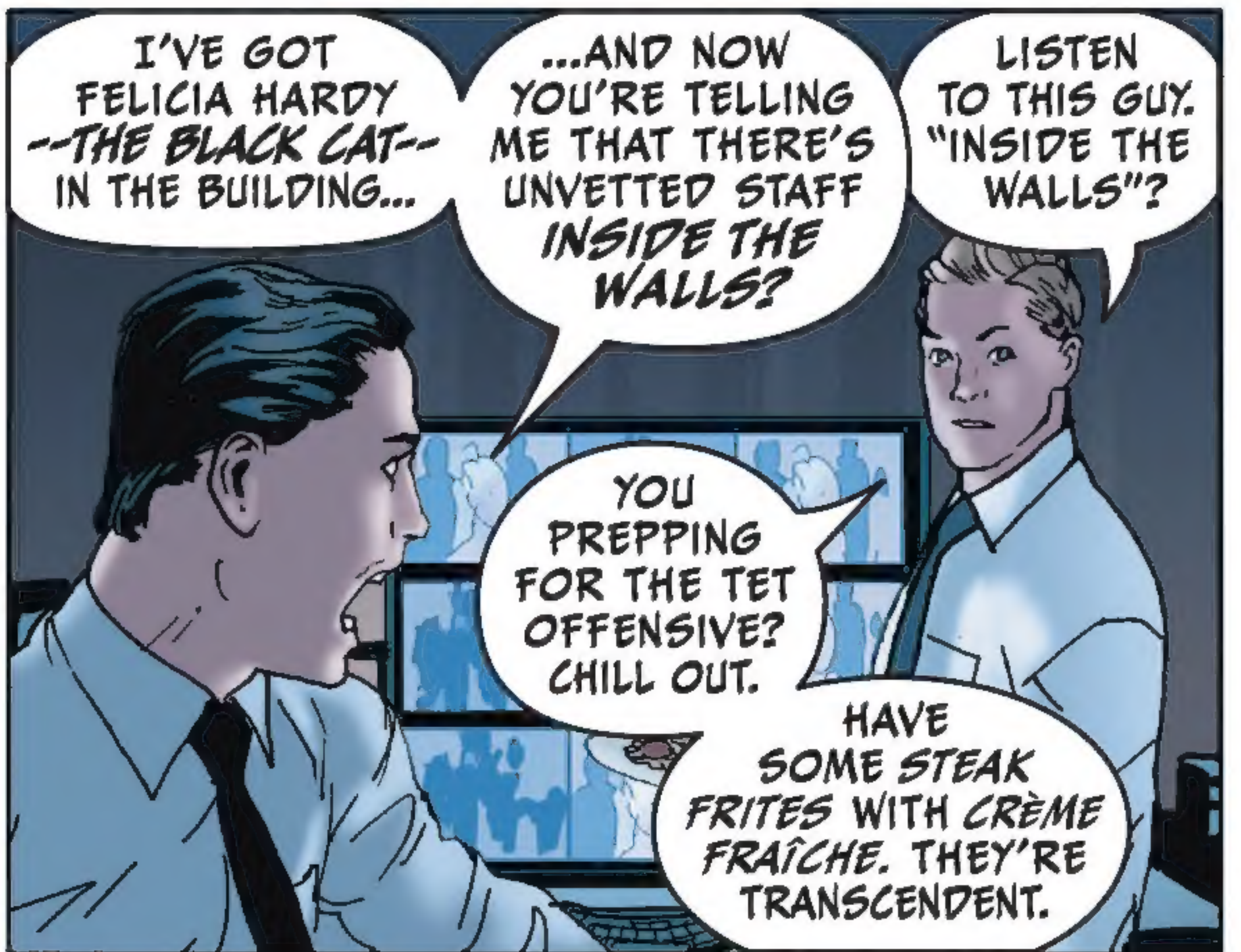
AND I'M HEARING ABOUT THIS NOW?!

ARE YOU KIDDING ME?!

SONNY, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. IT'S COOL, WE GOT THEM FROM THE TEMP AGENCY.

DAMMIT, KEVIN, I HAVE TO VET THESE PEOPLE!

I'M HEAD OF SECURITY ON THIS GIG!



I'VE GOT FELICIA HARDY --THE BLACK CAT-- IN THE BUILDING...

...AND NOW YOU'RE TELLING ME THAT THERE'S UNVETTED STAFF INSIDE THE WALLS?

LISTEN TO THIS GUY. "INSIDE THE WALLS"?

YOU PREPPING FOR THE TET OFFENSIVE? CHILL OUT.

HAVE SOME STEAK FRITES WITH CRÈME FRAÎCHE. THEY'RE TRANSCENDENT.



FELICIA HARDY. THE BIG BAD BLACK CAT.

COME ON, HOW DO YOU KNOW SHE'S HERE TO RIP US OFF?

MAYBE SHE'S JUST HERE FOR A GOOD TIME?

KRNC!



I KNOW HER TYPE.

NEW JERSEY SHERIFF'S DEPT
OCAMPO, SONNY



ODESSA!
DARLING!

IMAGINE
SEEING *YOU*
HERE!

THIS IS
ODESSA
DRAKE.

H.B.I.C. OF
THE NEW YORK
THIEVES GUILD.



OUR
RELATIONSHIP
IS...

...COMPLICATED.

HARDY.



SO NICE TO
SEE YOU.

A HAPPY
ACCIDENT,
I'M SURE.

YOU KNOW WHO
I AM. THERE IS
NOTHING I DO
"ACCIDENTALLY."



A LITTLE WHILE AGO,
I MESSED UP A BIG
HAUL FOR THE GUILD.

IT WAS THE RIGHT
THING TO DO.

BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY,
IT WAS A *THRILL*.

I HAVE TERMS.
YOU *WILL* MAKE
THIS RIGHT WITH THE
GUILD, FELICIA.
FIRST--



DARLING.
LET ME STOP
YOU THERE.

YOU CAN
TRAIN A *DOG*
TO HEEL,
ODESSA.



BUT
A CAT...

CLICK!



...A CAT DOESN'T LISTEN. TO ANYONE.



A CAT BECOMES MORE TRACTABLE WHEN STARVED, FELICIA.



I WOULD MAKE THAT OLIVE LAST.

IT IS THE LAST PROFIT OF OUR... TRADE THAT YOU WILL ENJOY UNTIL WE ARE RECONCILED.

THAT WENT WELL!



SHE HAS CLAWS?

SONNY, NOOO!

THIS IS SO EXCITING!

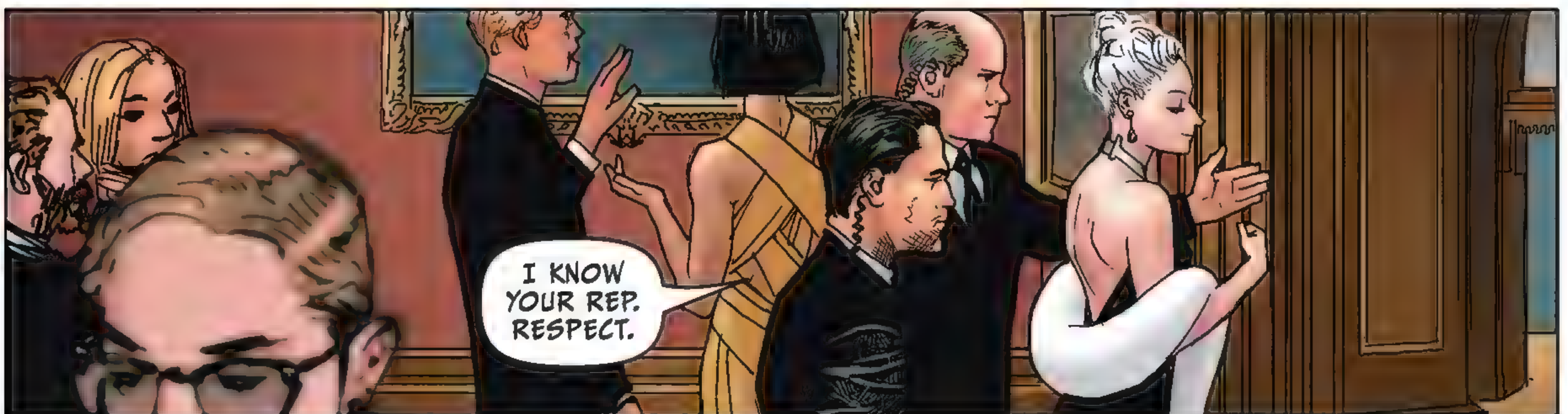
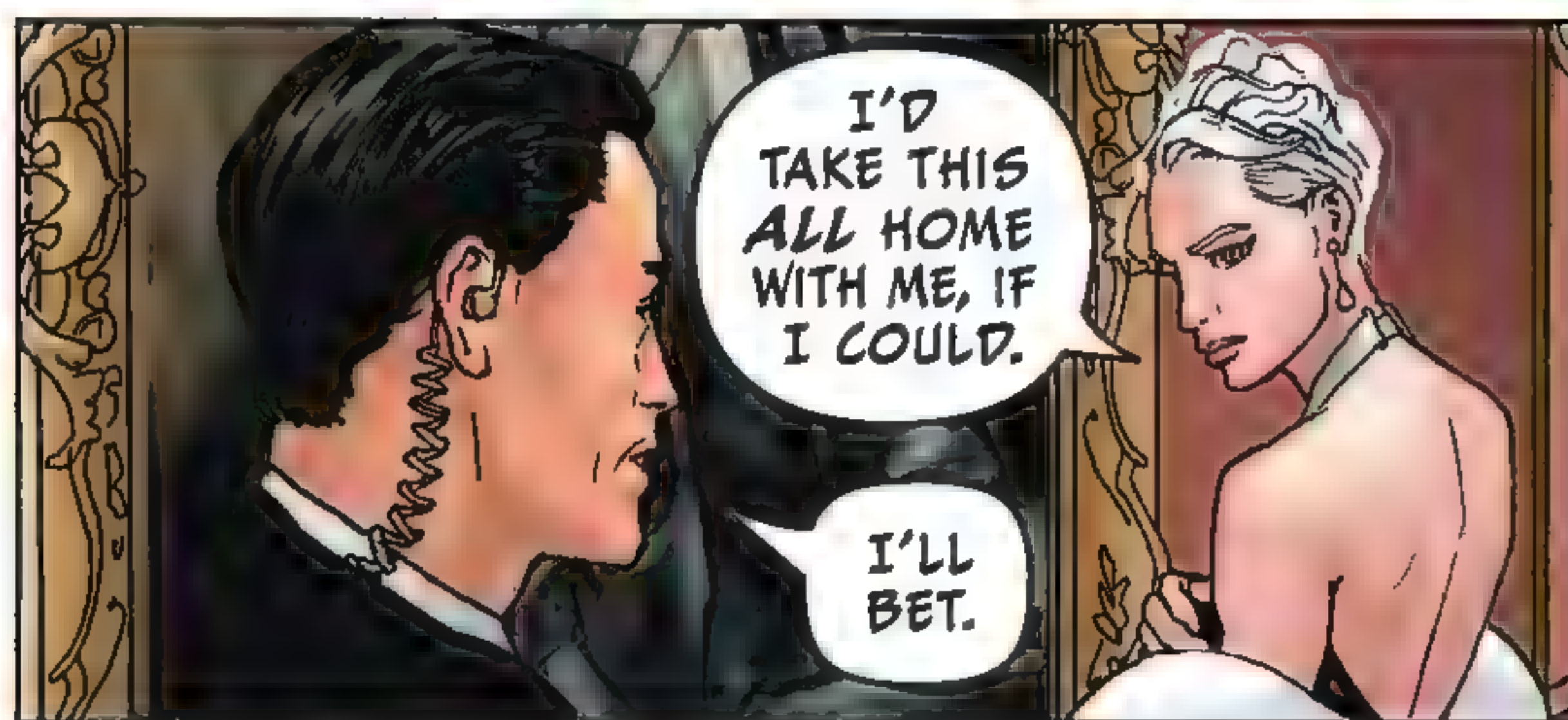
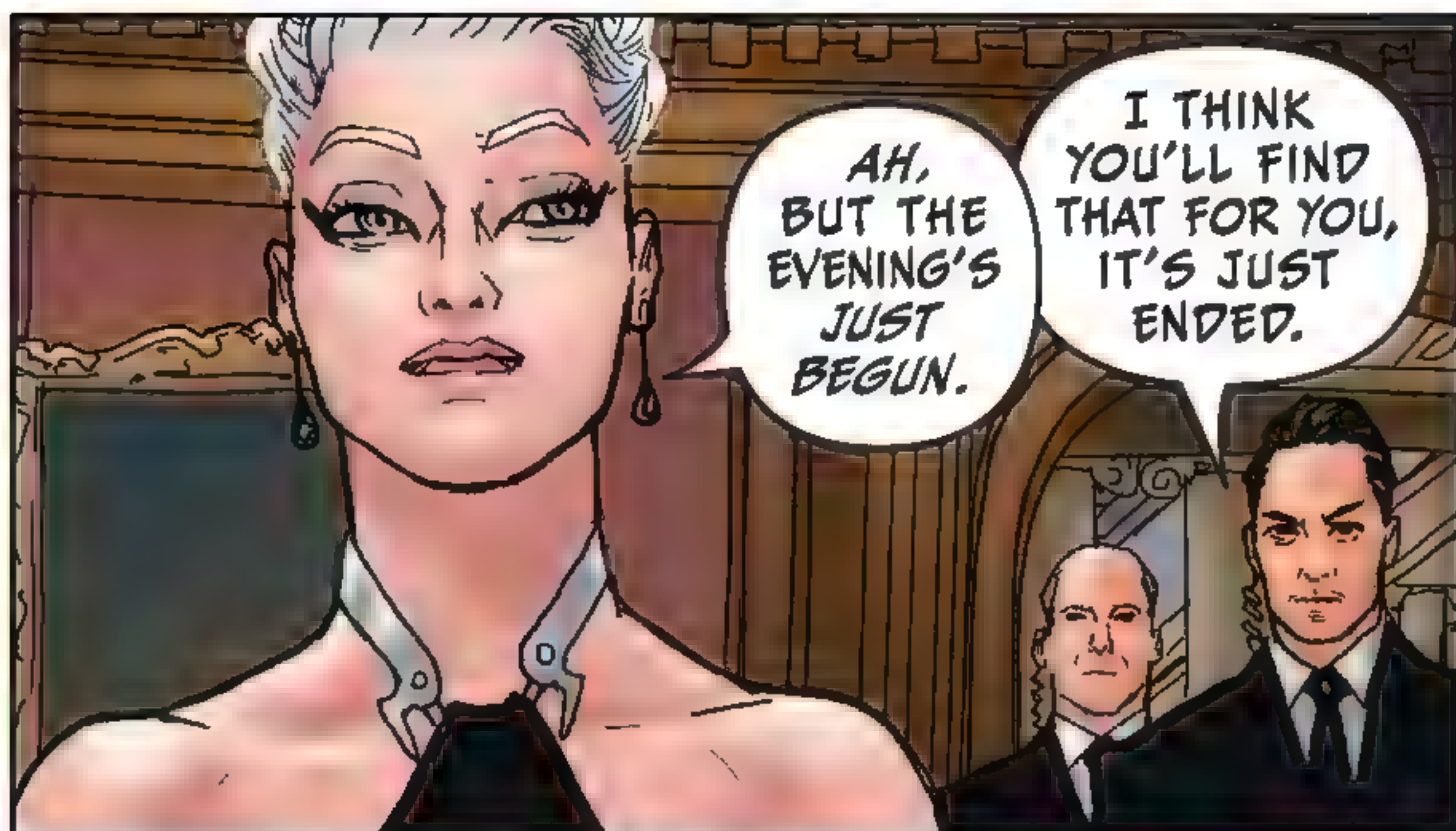
OKAY, I'M ESCORTING HER OUT.

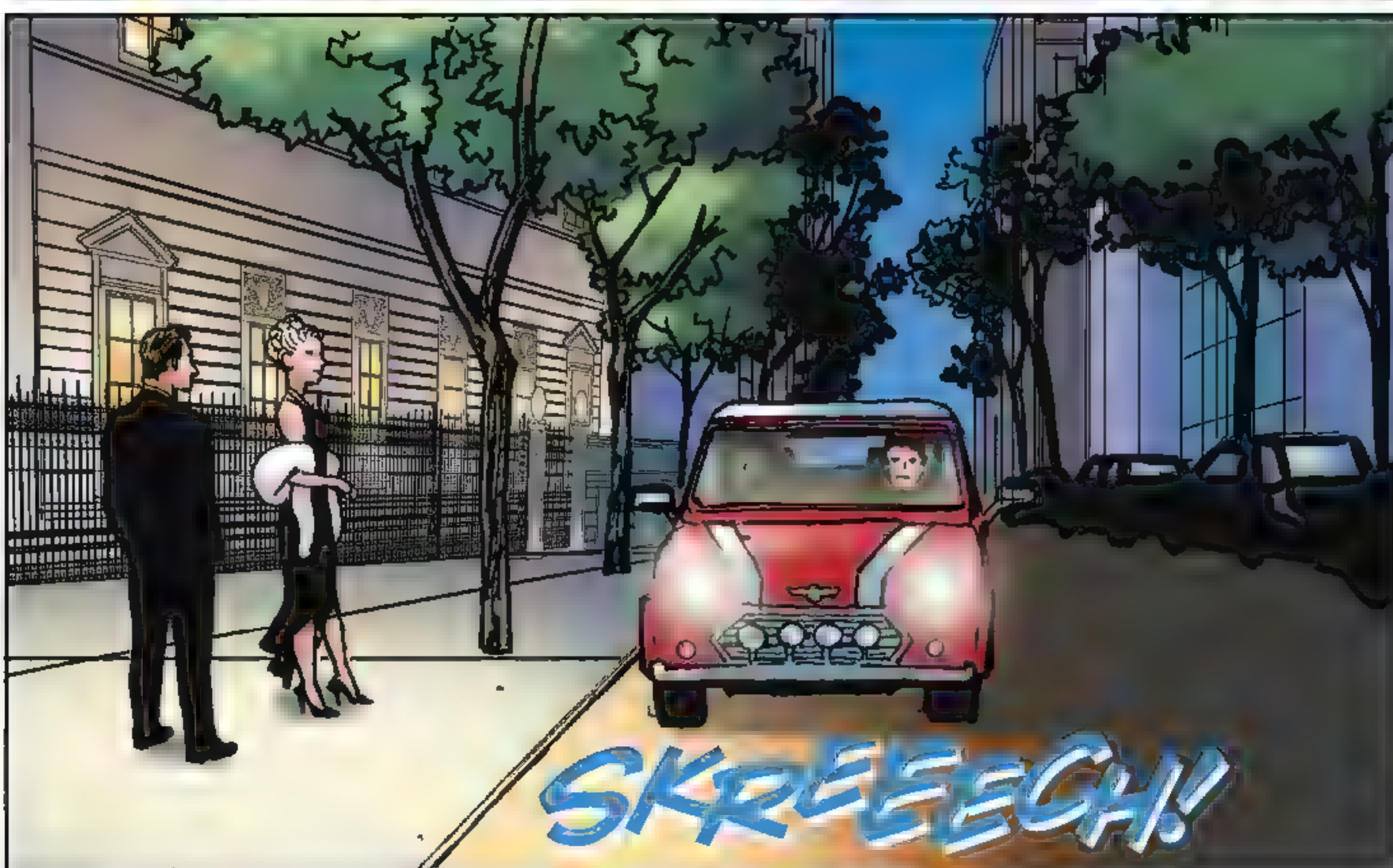
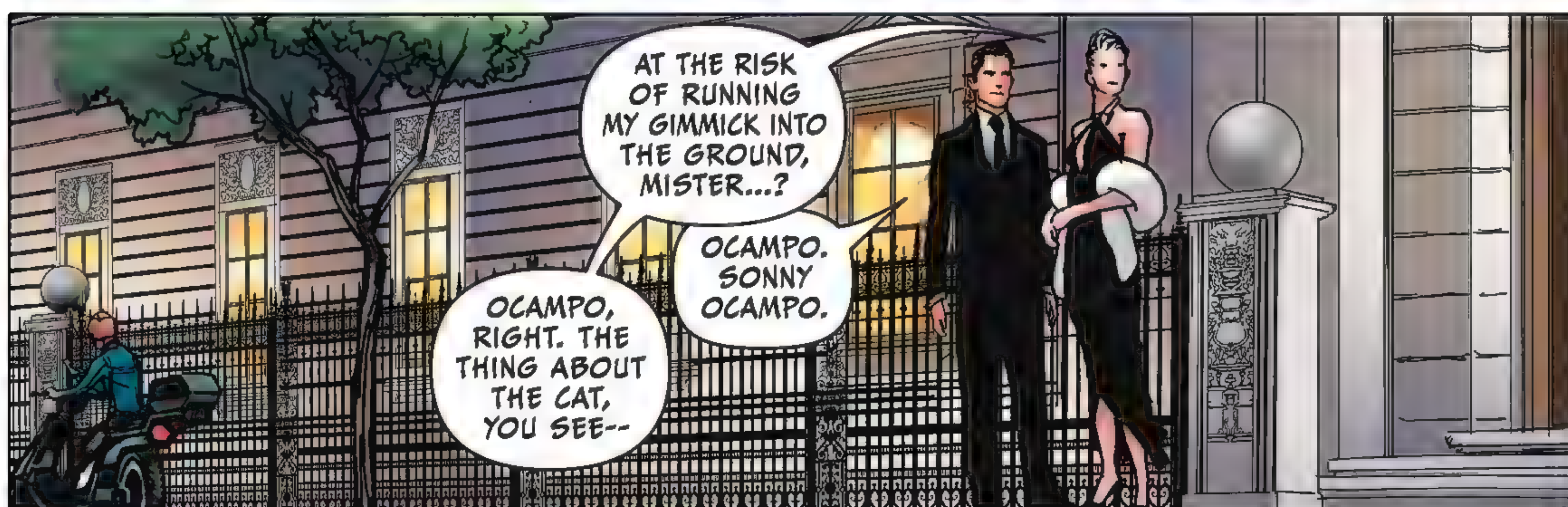
NOPE. IF HER ASS IS OUT ON THE STREET--

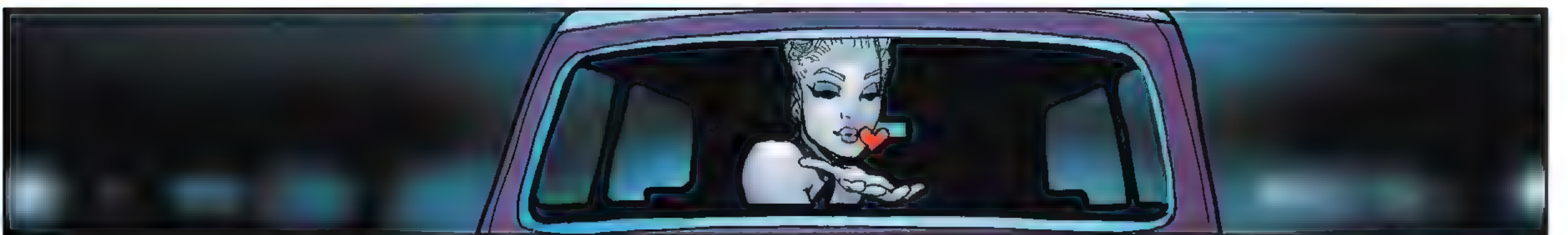
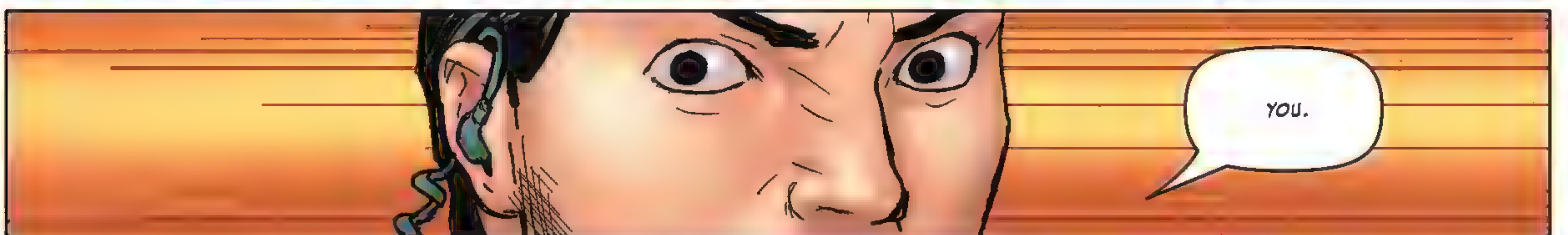
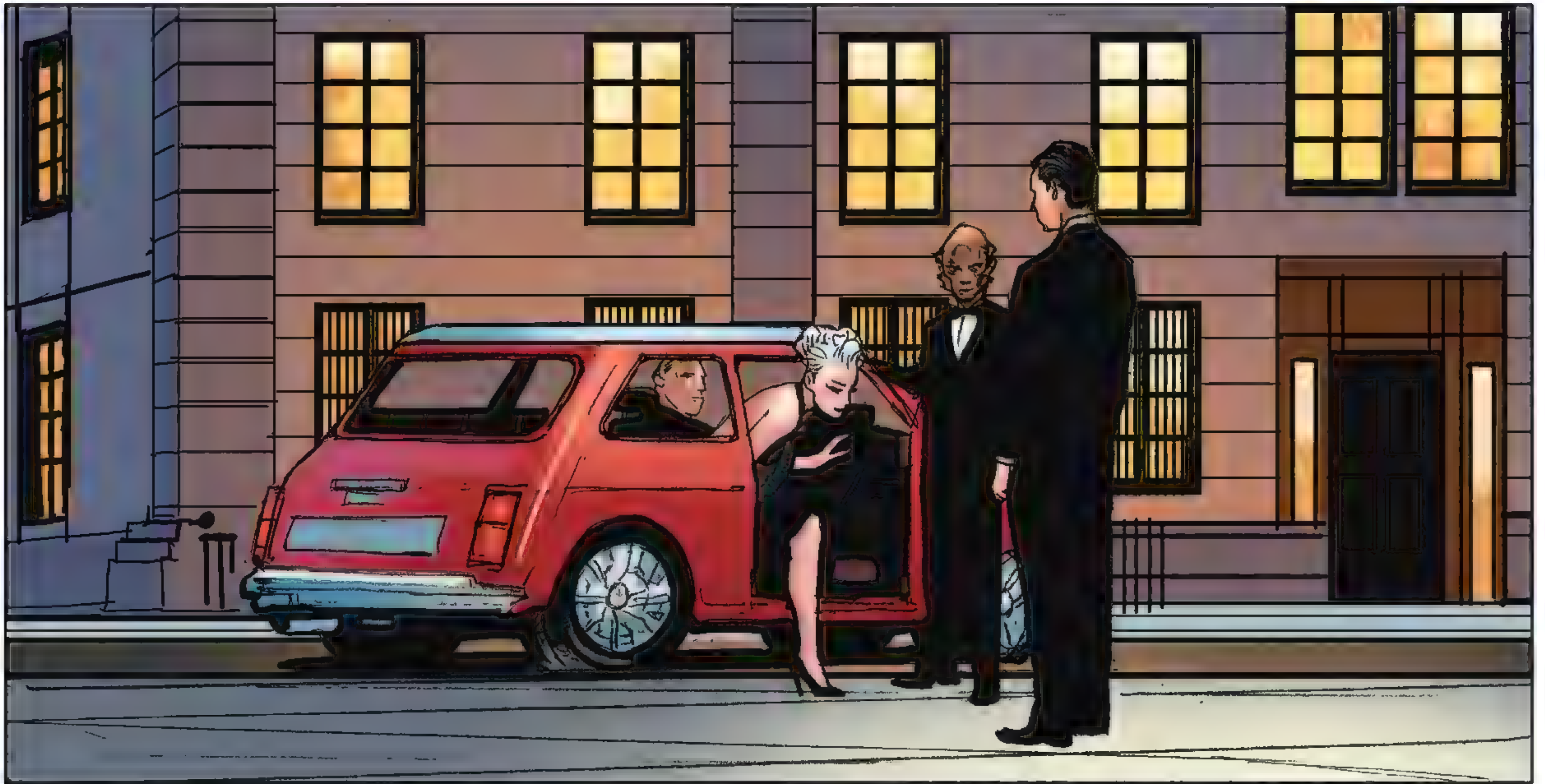


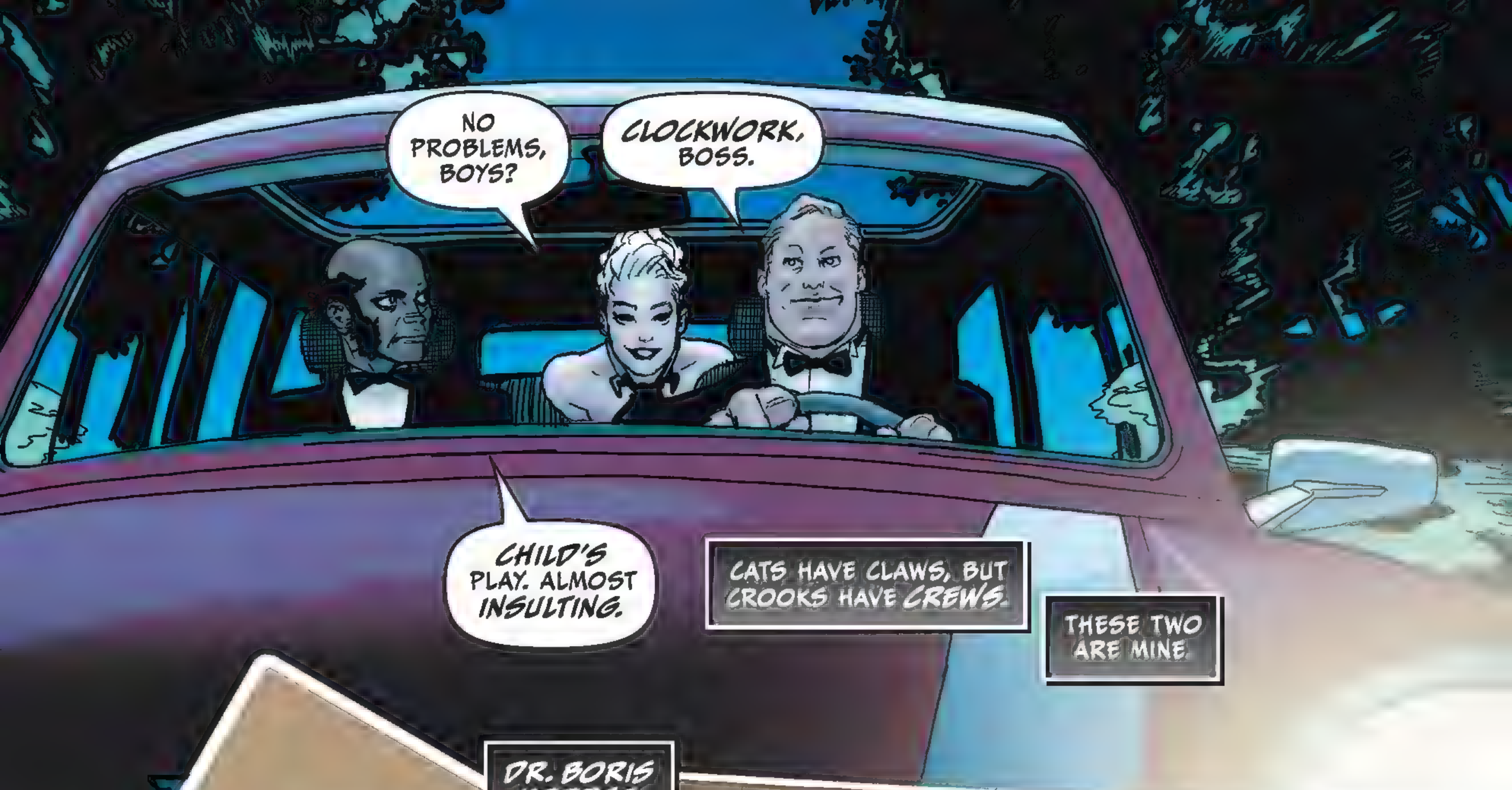
"--THEN SHE'S NOT STEALING ANYTHING."

CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC









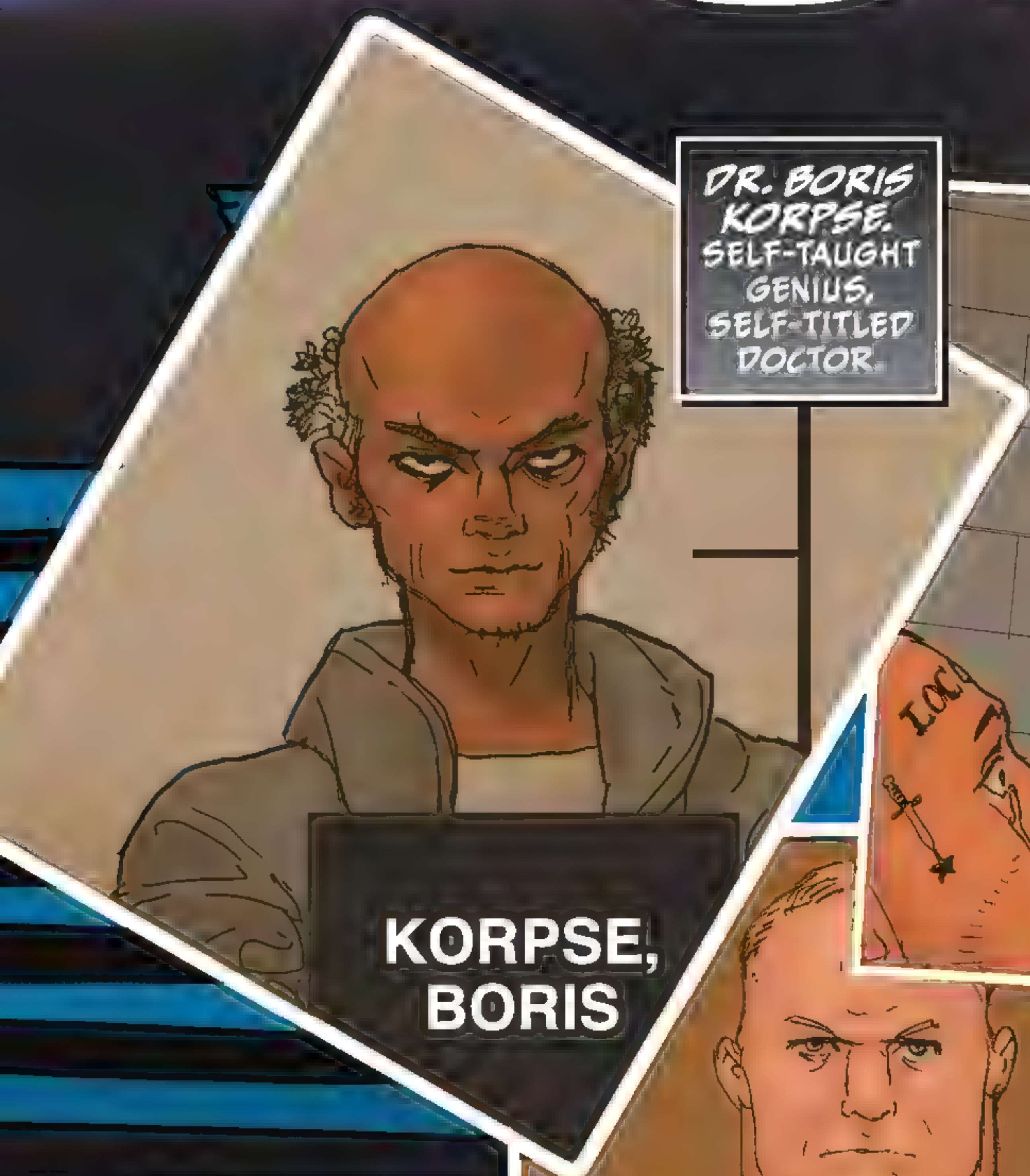
NO PROBLEMS, BOYS?

CLOCKWORK, BOSS.

CHILD'S PLAY. ALMOST INSULTING.

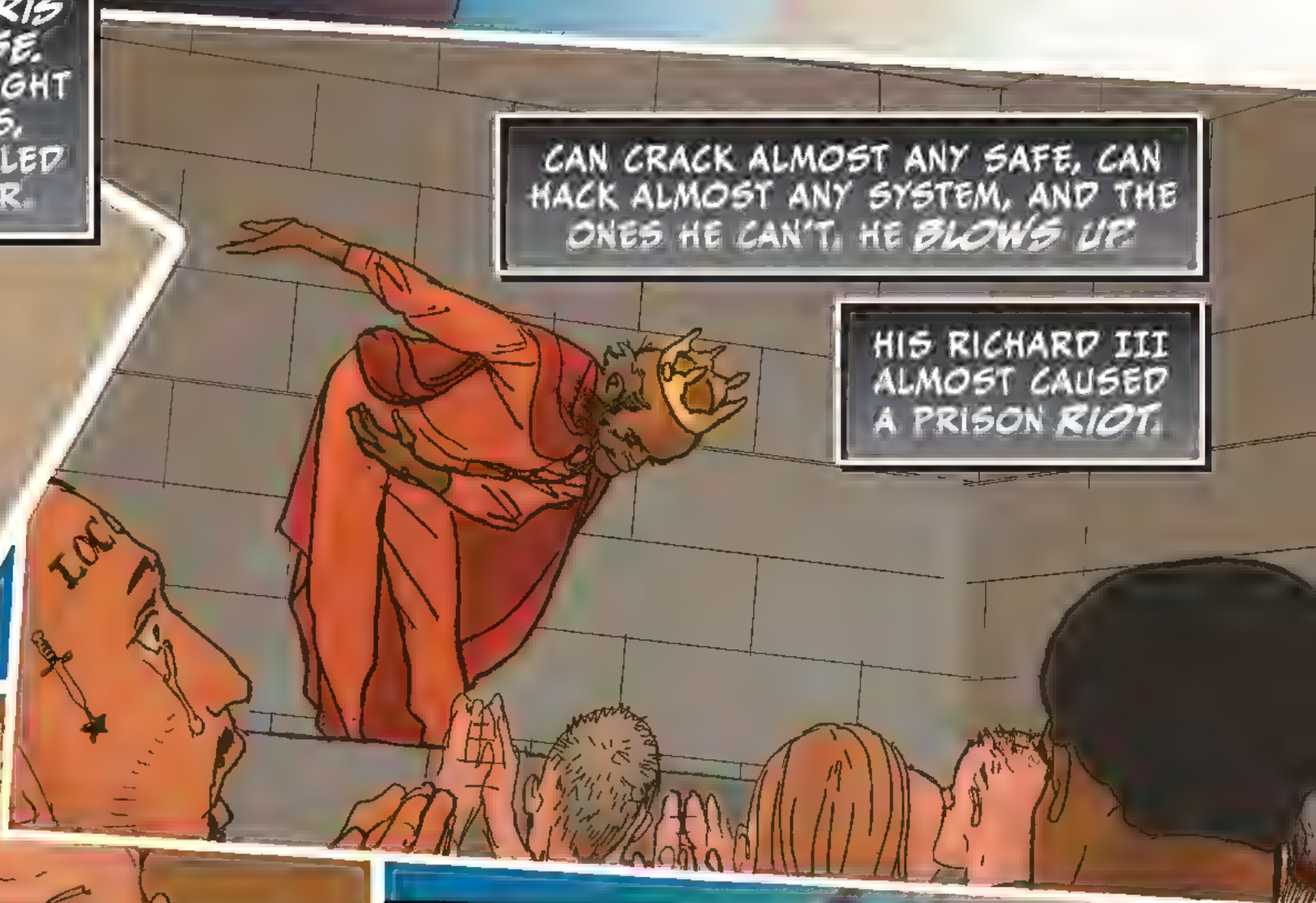
CATS HAVE CLAWS, BUT CROOKS HAVE CREWS.

THESE TWO ARE MINE.



DR. BORIS KORPSE. SELF-TAUGHT GENIUS, SELF-TITLED DOCTOR.

KORPSE, BORIS



CAN CRACK ALMOST ANY SAFE, CAN HACK ALMOST ANY SYSTEM, AND THE ONES HE CAN'T, HE BLOWS UP

HIS RICHARD III ALMOST CAUSED A PRISON RIOT.

BRUNO GRAINGER. EX-ARMY HELICOPTER PILOT, EX-BAGRAM HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMP.

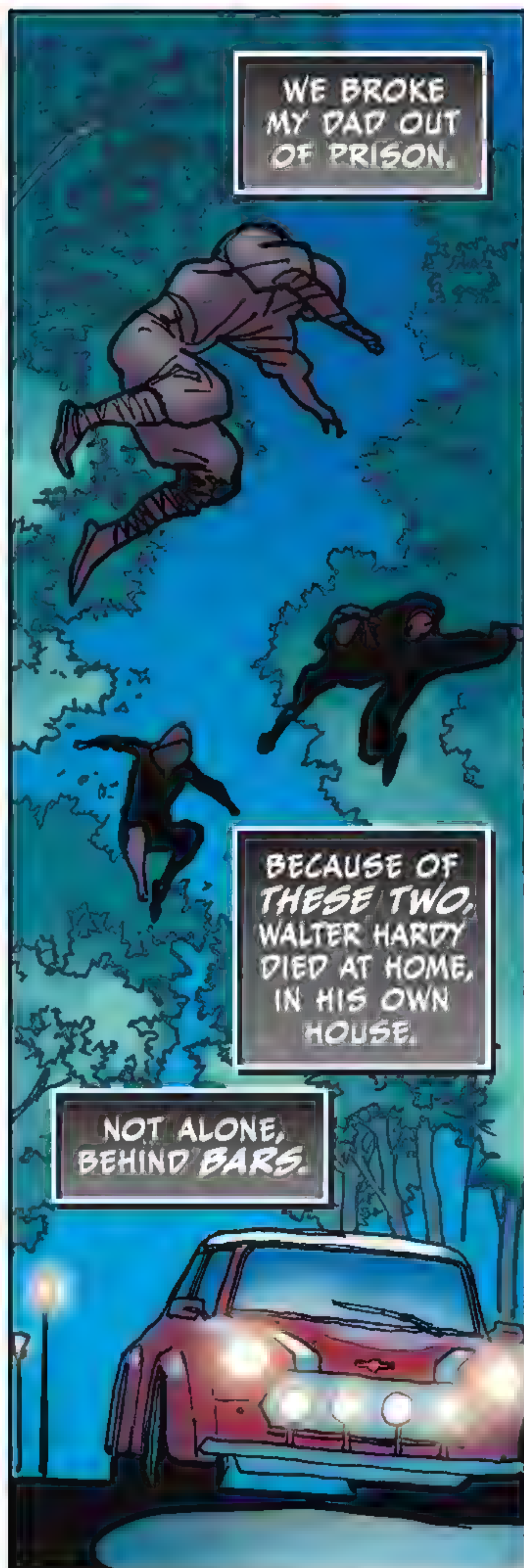


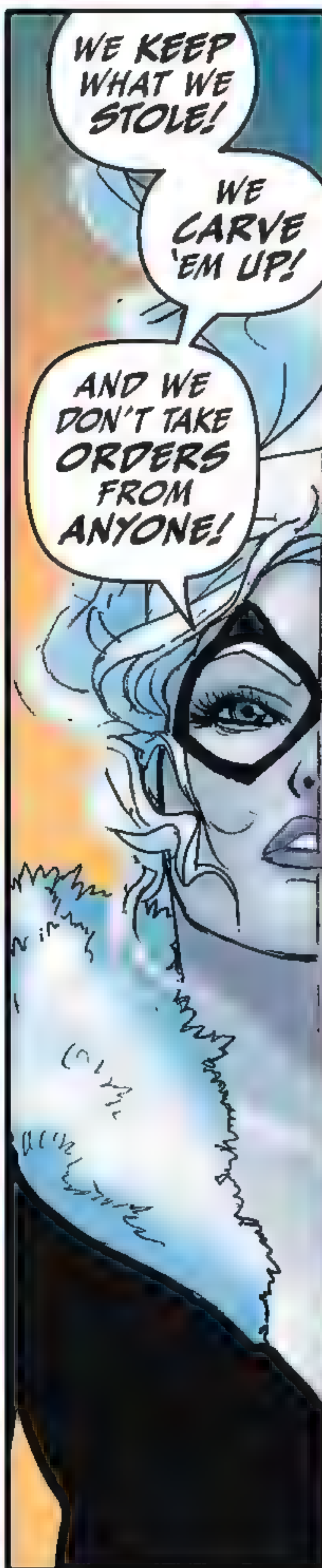
GRAINGER, BRUNO

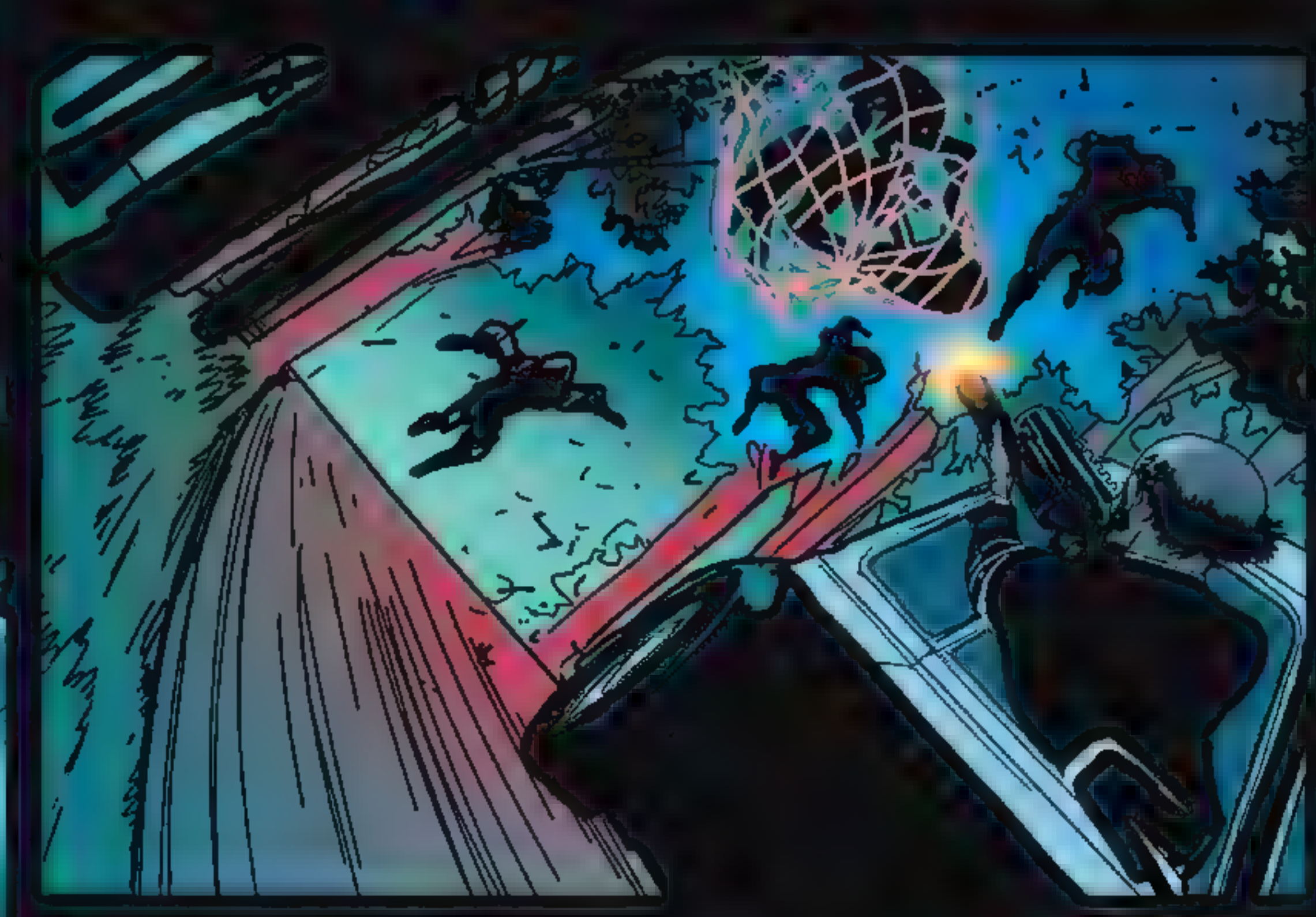
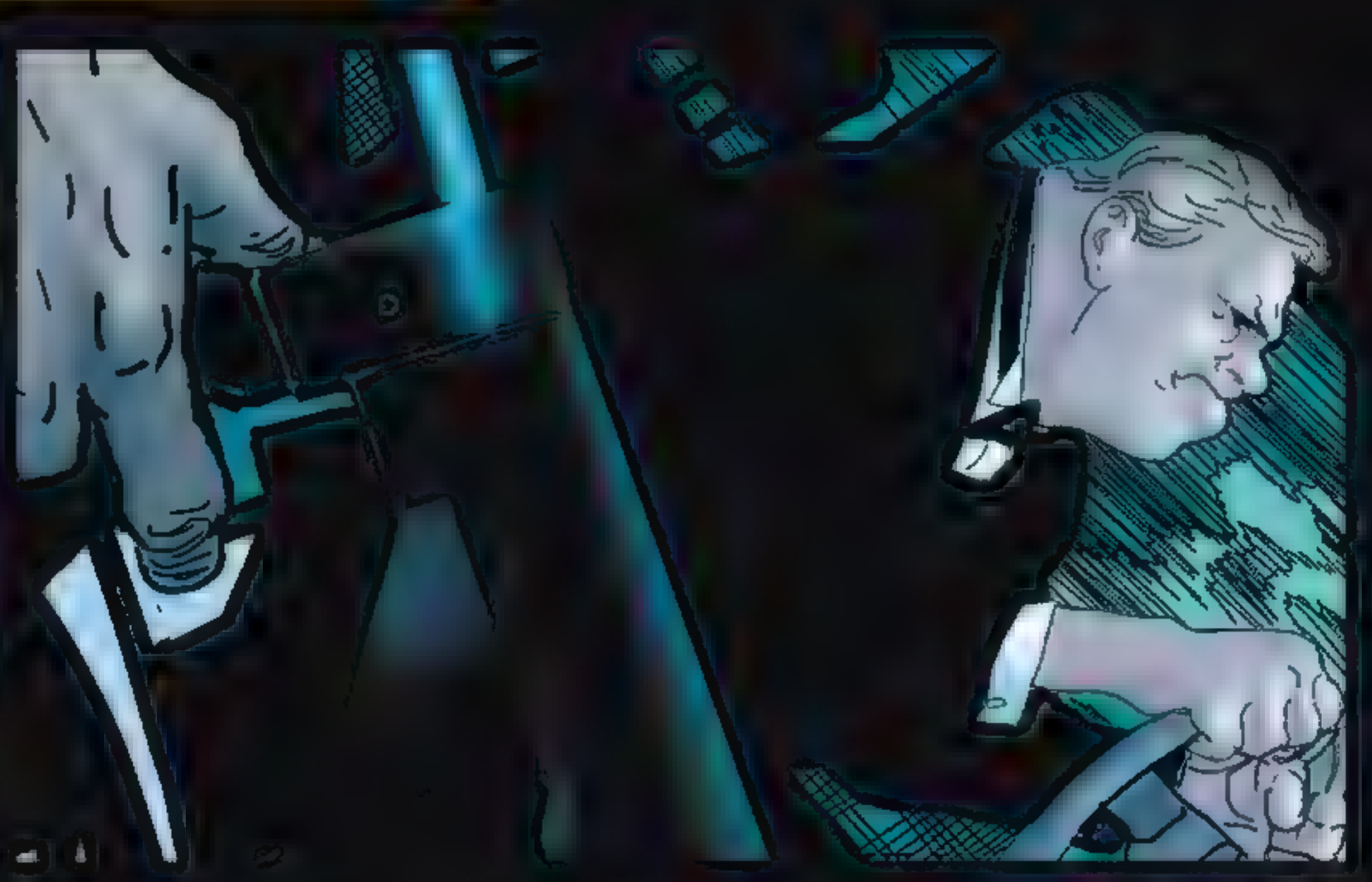
DRIVES ANYTHING WITH WHEELS, FLIES ANYTHING WITH BLADES, AND WOULD RAISE HANDS TO THE HULK IF I ASKED HIM TO.

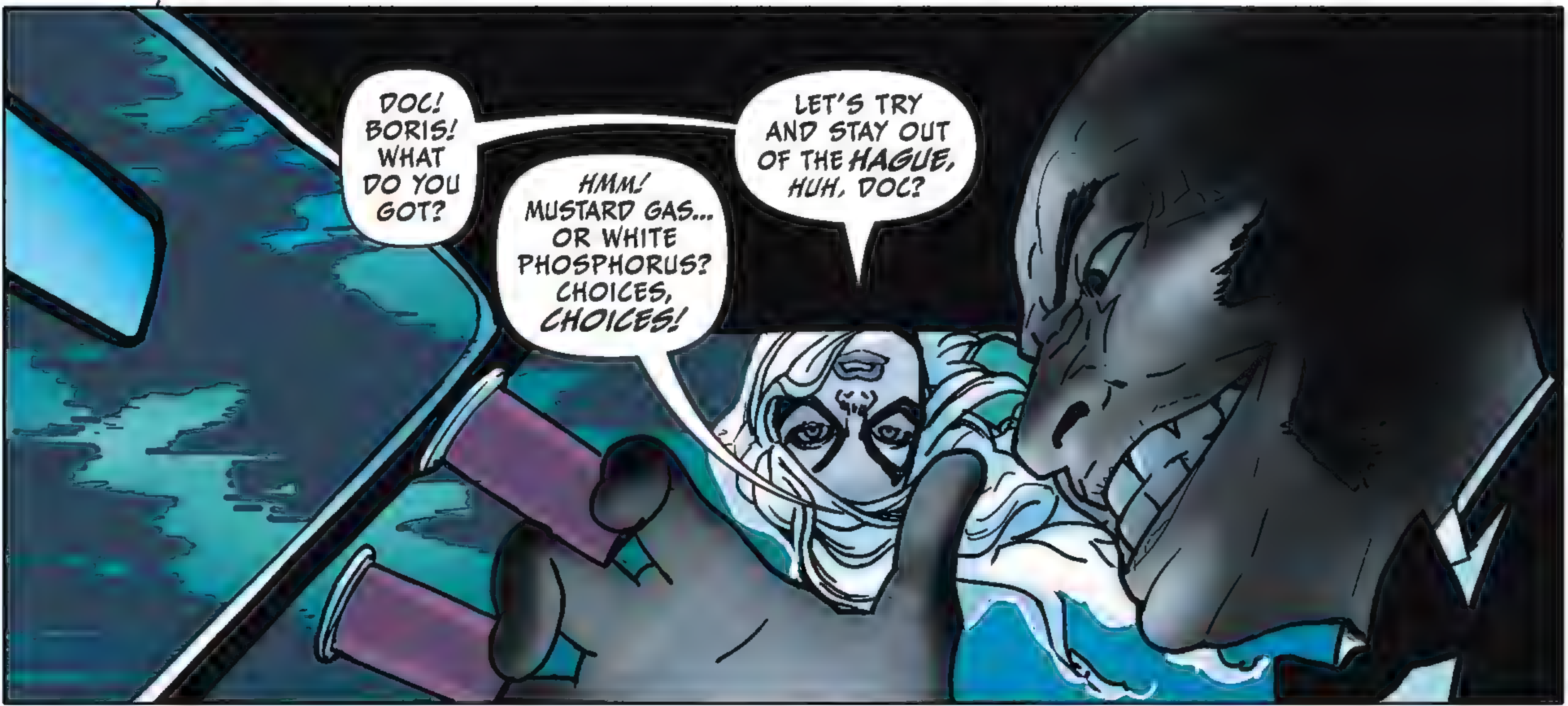
HAD A BIT OF A PROBLEM WITH AUTHORITY, UNTIL HE CAME TO WORK FOR ME.













WHAT?
NO!

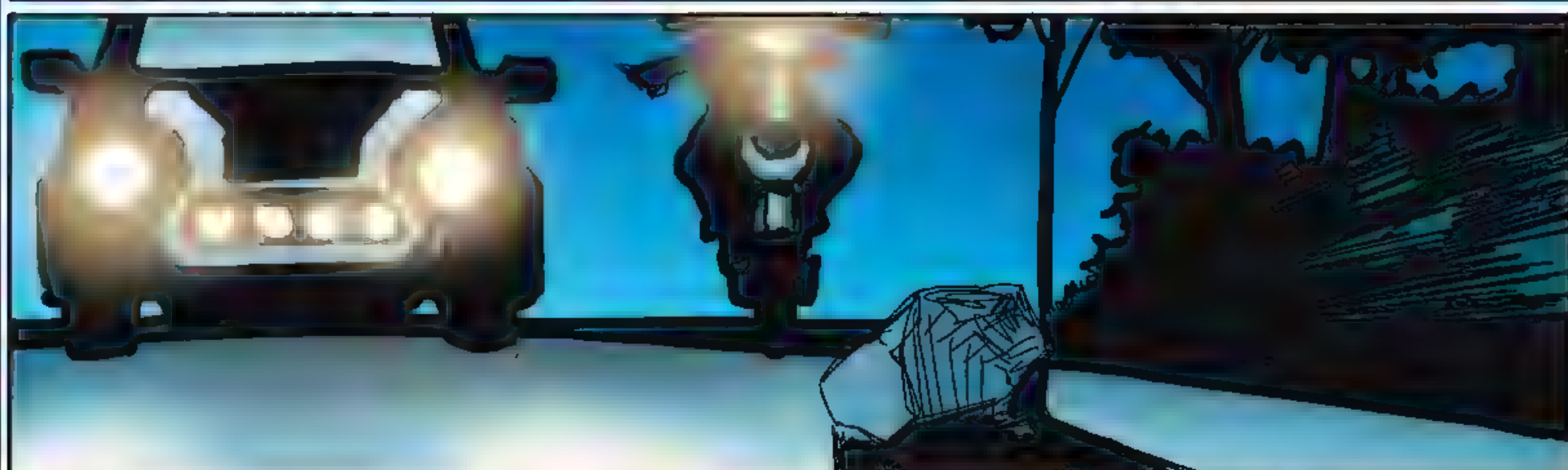
IT
WOULD
NEVER
WORK.



I'M NO
GOOD FOR
YOU, BABY.
YOU SEE...



...I'M BAD
LUCK.



À LA
PROCHAINE,
HANDSOME!

KLONK! WOOSH!



NEW PLAN,
BOYS. I'LL TAKE
THE PAINTING AND
LEAD THESE GOONS
OFF, YOU TWO HEAD
FOR THE HIDEOUT.
GOOD?

YOU
GOT IT,
BOSS.

IF YOU WON'T LET
ME SHOOT ANTHRAX
AT THEM, THEN I SEE NO
REASON TO PROLONG
THIS CONFLICT.

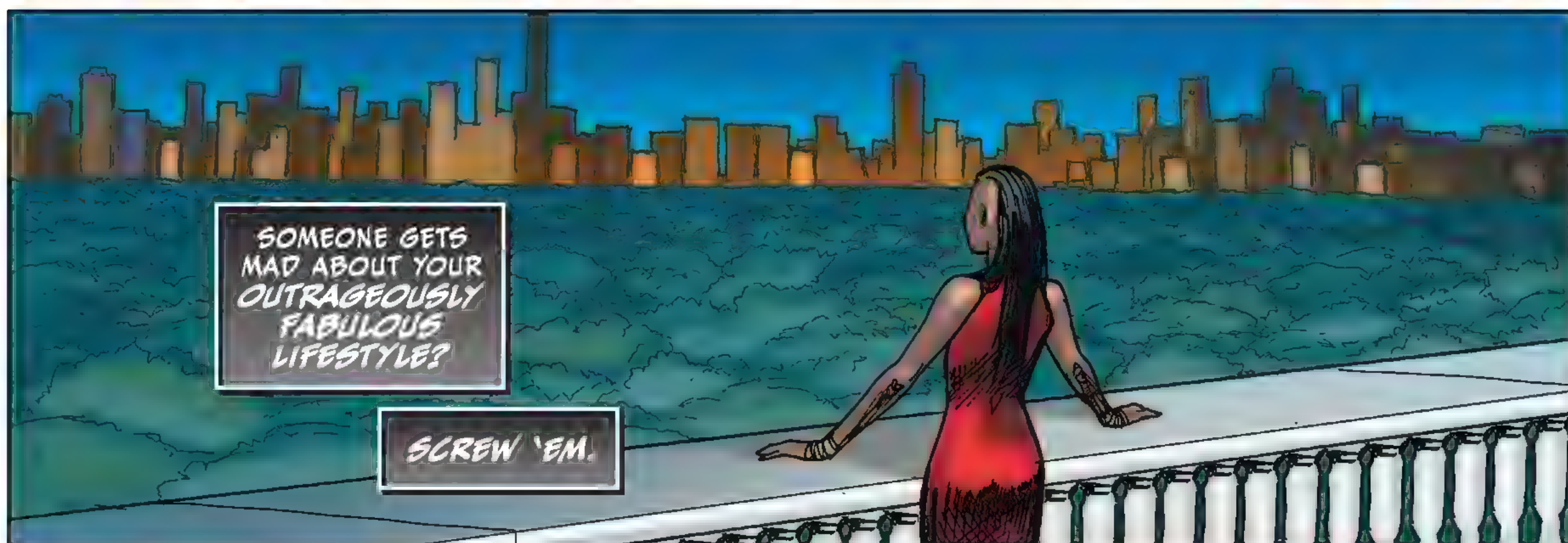
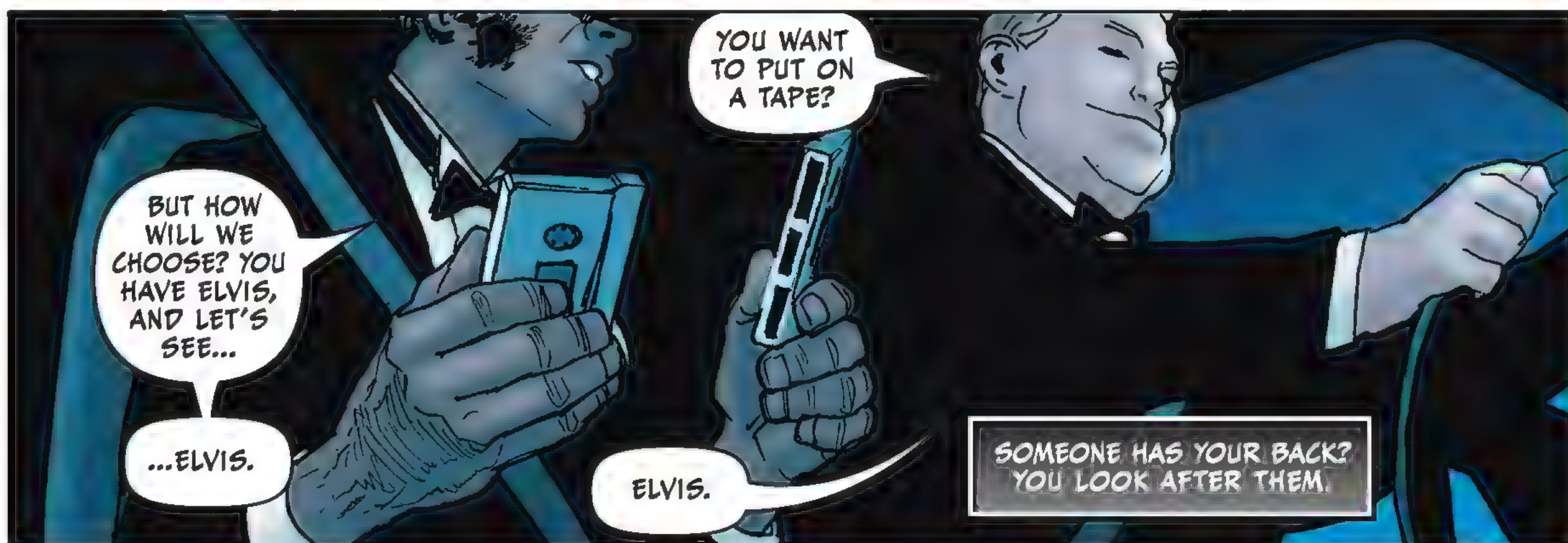
AND MAYBE
DON'T COMMIT
ANY WAR CRIMES
BETWEEN NOW
AND THEN?



TALLY-HO,
YOU
MOOKS!

THAT'S
WHAT THIS
LIFE IS.

SOMETHING
CATCHES YOUR EYE?
YOU TAKE IT.







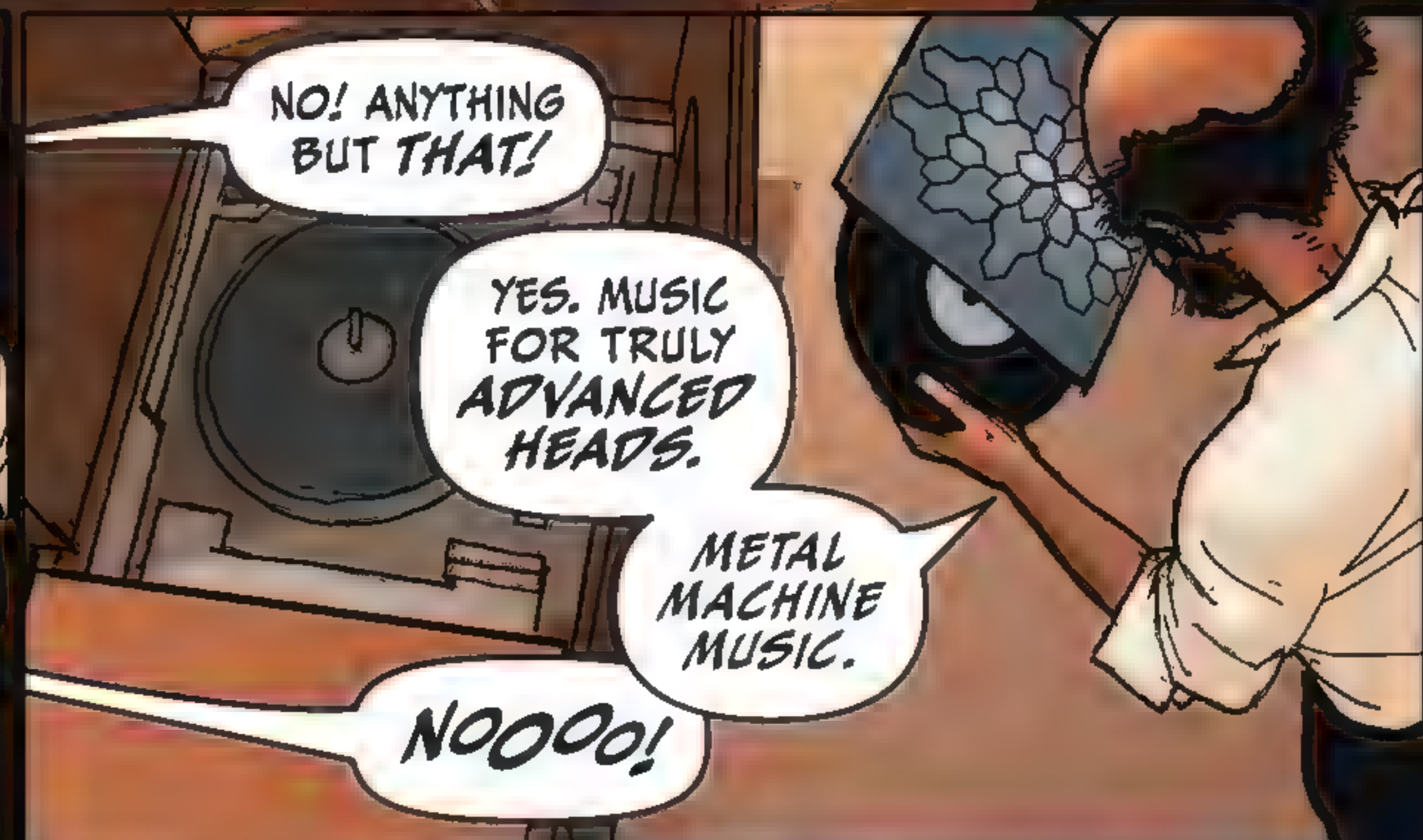
MUSIC! DRINKS!
CELEBRATION!

I WILL
PUT ON A
RECORD!



NO! NOT
A CHANCE!
FORGET IT!

IT'S HIS
TURN.



NO! ANYTHING
BUT THAT!

YES. MUSIC
FOR TRULY
ADVANCED
HEADS.

METAL
MACHINE
MUSIC.

NOOOO!



WHAT WAS THE DEAL WITH
THE GUILD, BOSS?

THEY'RE
STILL SORE
ABOUT THE **GREAT
SUPER HERO
HEIST.**

GOING TO
TRY AND STARVE
ME OUT, HIJACK
MY SCORES.



OUR SCORES.

MAYBE YOU
TWO SHOULD
DISTANCE
YOURSELVES
FROM ME--

NO.
YOU'RE THE
BOSS. I'LL
STICK WITH
YOU.

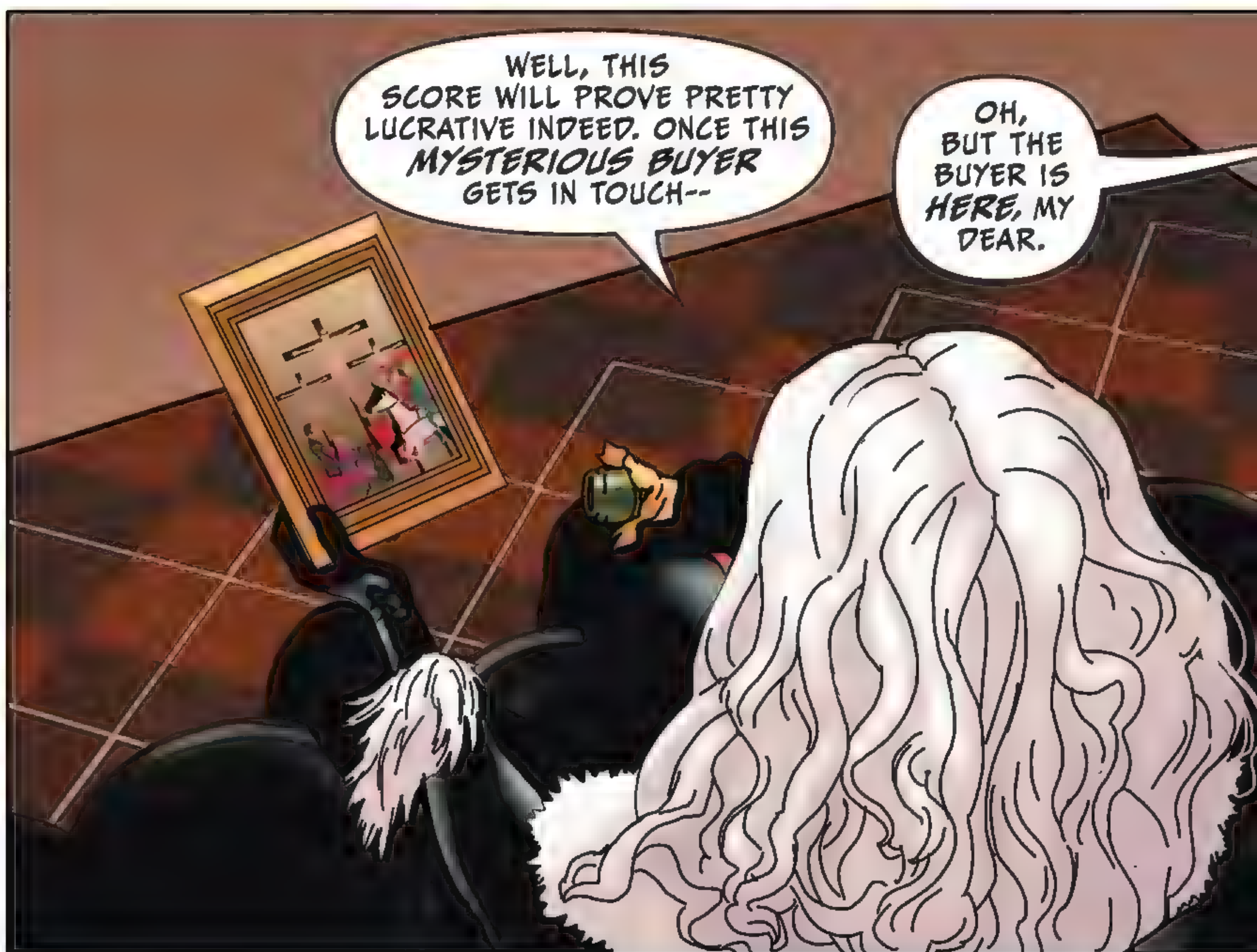


AND I AS
WELL. UNTIL
YOUR **LUCRATIVE
JOBS** DRY UP,
AT LEAST.



GOT IT.

MY BOYS.
MY CREW.



WELL, THIS
SCORE WILL PROVE PRETTY
LUCRATIVE INDEED. ONCE THIS
MYSTERIOUS BUYER
GETS IN TOUCH--

OH,
BUT THE
BUYER IS
HERE, MY
DEAR.



WHAT?!
NO ONE
CAN GET IN HERE
WITHOUT ME
KNOWING!

BUT
ONE MAN
COULD



YOUR
SECURITY
MEASURES
WERE **TOP**
STUFF
INDEED.

I **ALMOST**
BROKE A SWEAT.

THAT VOICE. THE MAN
WHO TAUGHT ME ALL
I KNOW ABOUT ROBBING,
THIEVING, LOOTING.



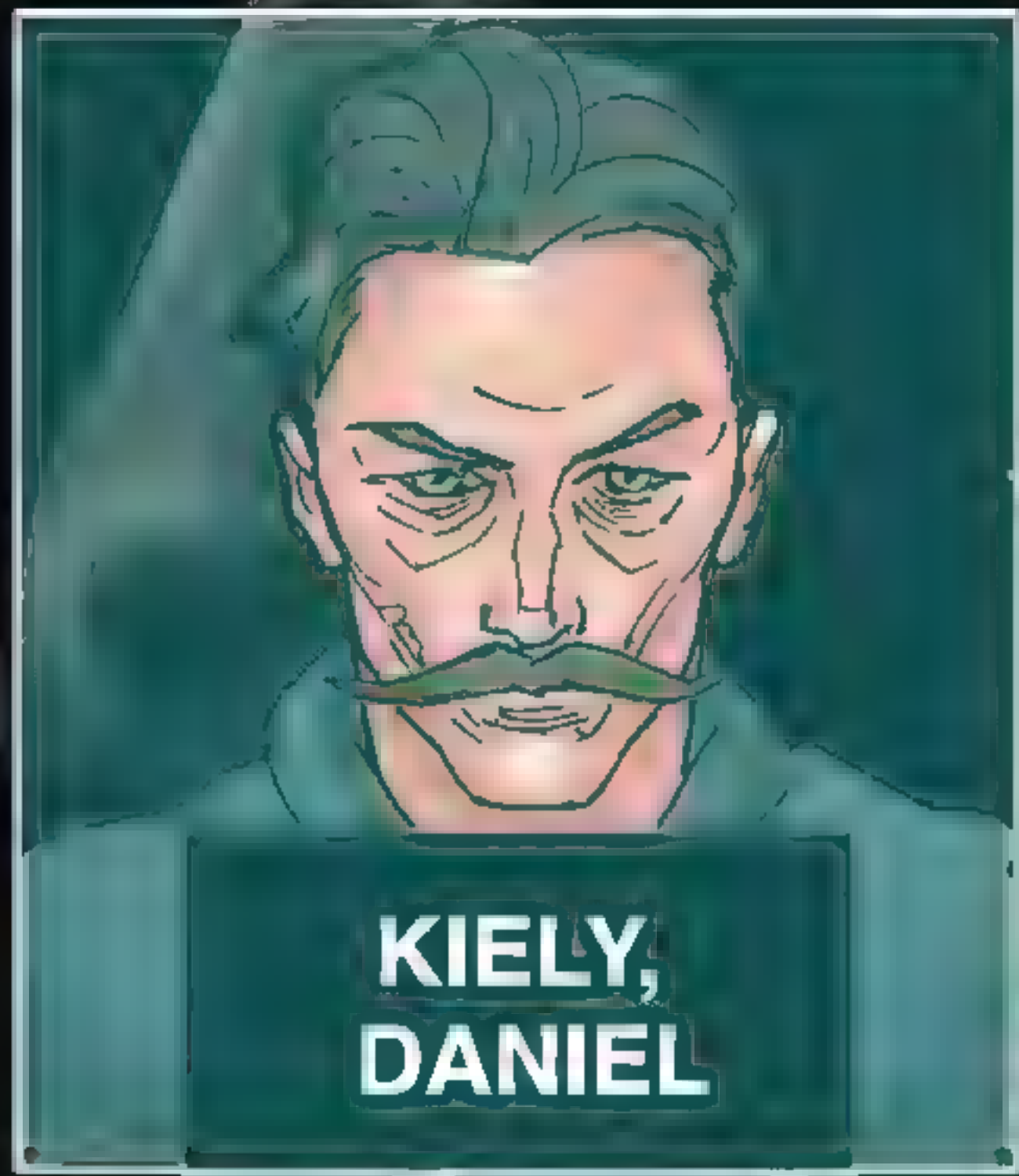
YOU DID **FINE**
WORK TONIGHT.
CHAOTIC AND CHEEKY,
SNUBBING THE NOSES
OF THE POWERFUL
AND MAKING OFF
WITH THE LOOT.
I LOVE IT.

BUT
TONIGHT
WAS JUST
THE **FIRST**
STAGE OF
MY MASTER
PLAN--

THE MAN
WHO TAUGHT
MY FATHER.

THE BLACK FOX.

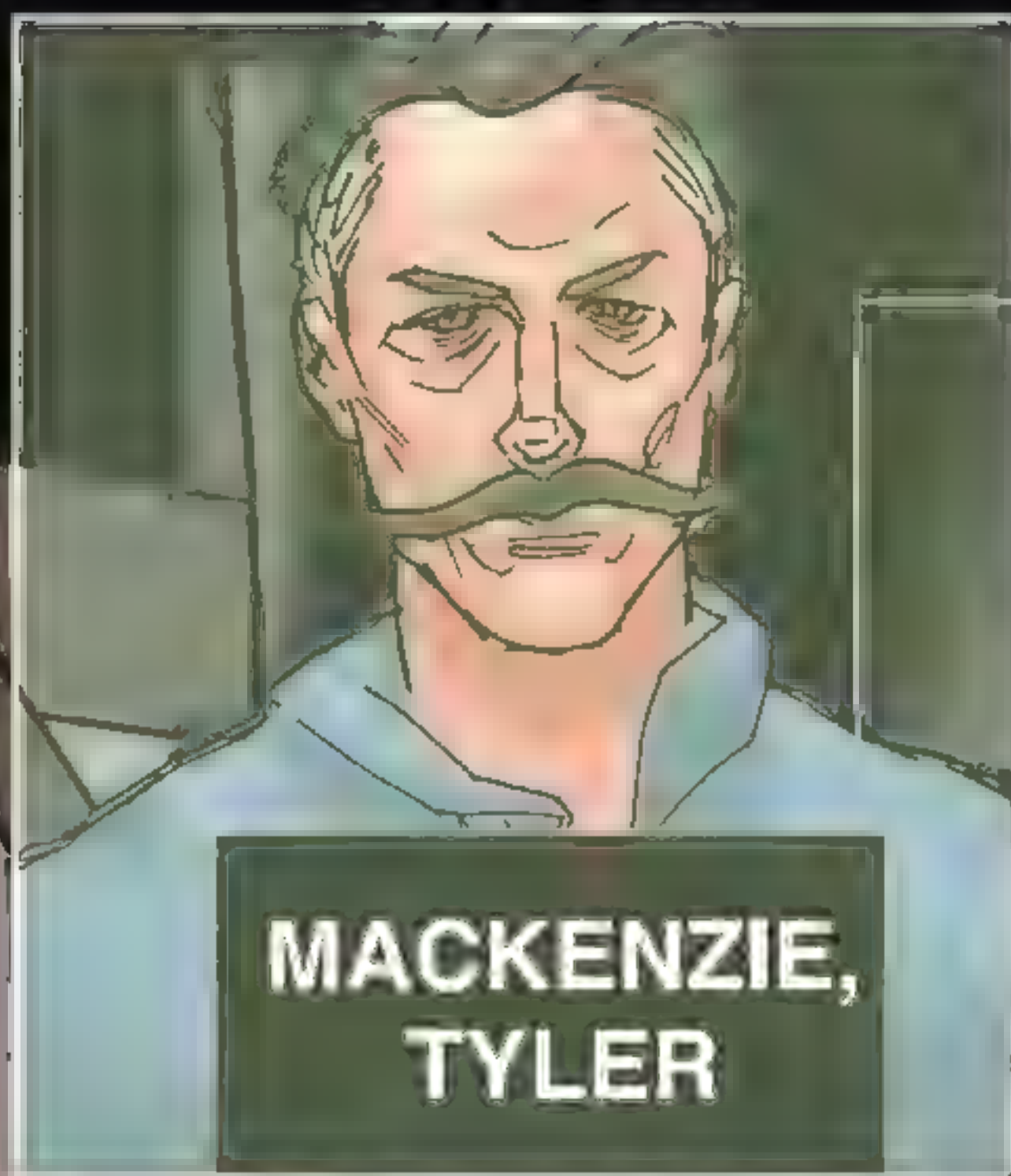
--SO TELL
ME, DO THE
THREE OF
YOU HAVE THE
NERVE AND THE
NOUS FOR THE
NEXT STEP, MY
DARLINGS?



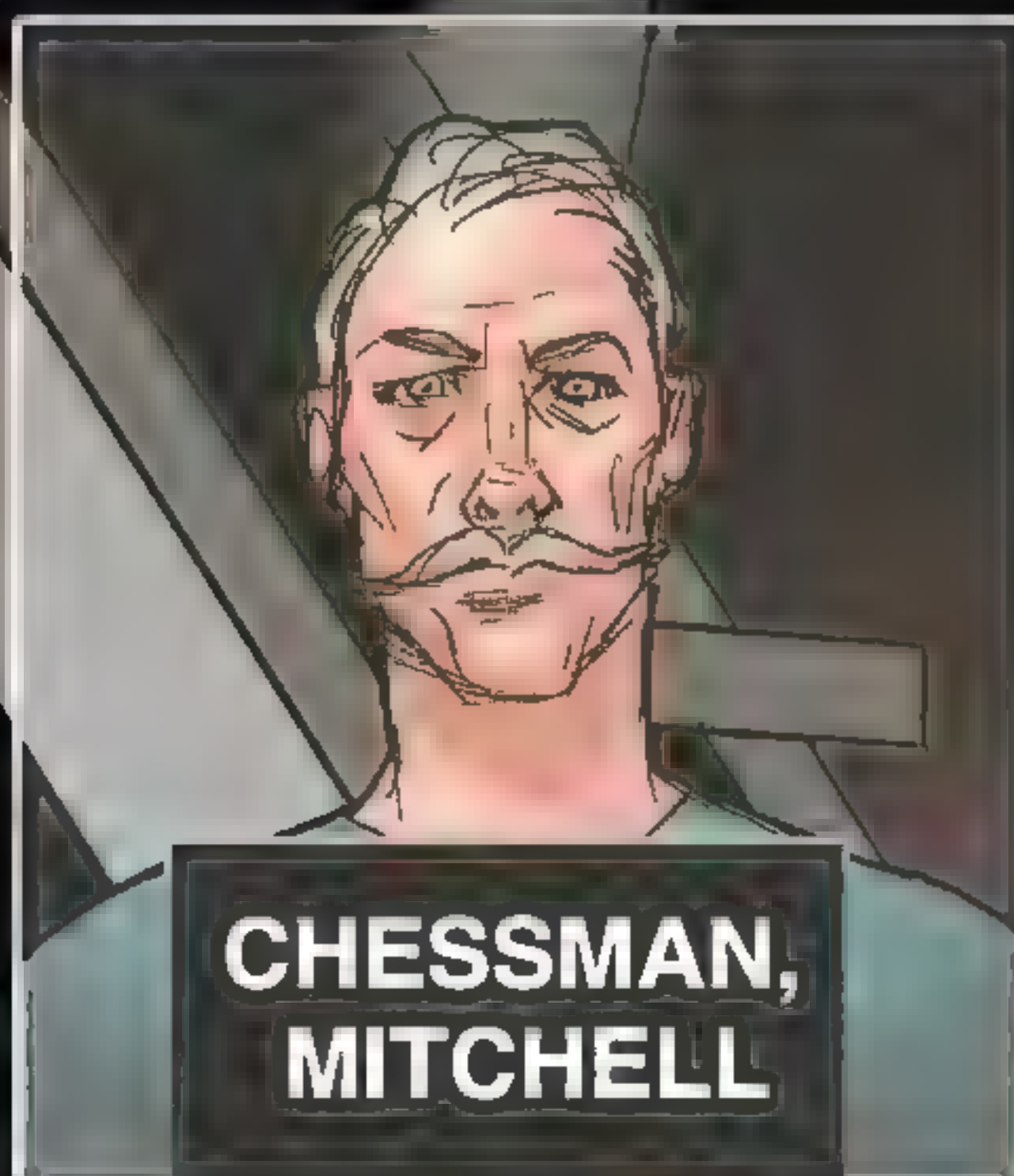
KIELY,
DANIEL



LAZENBY,
MATTHEW



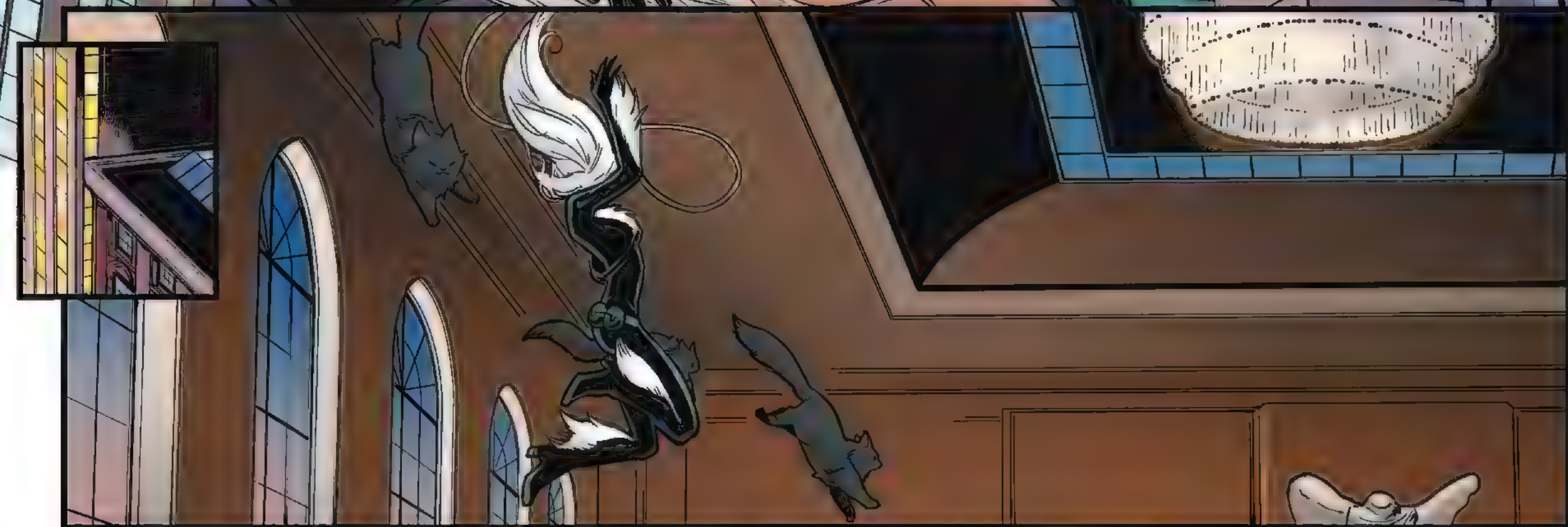
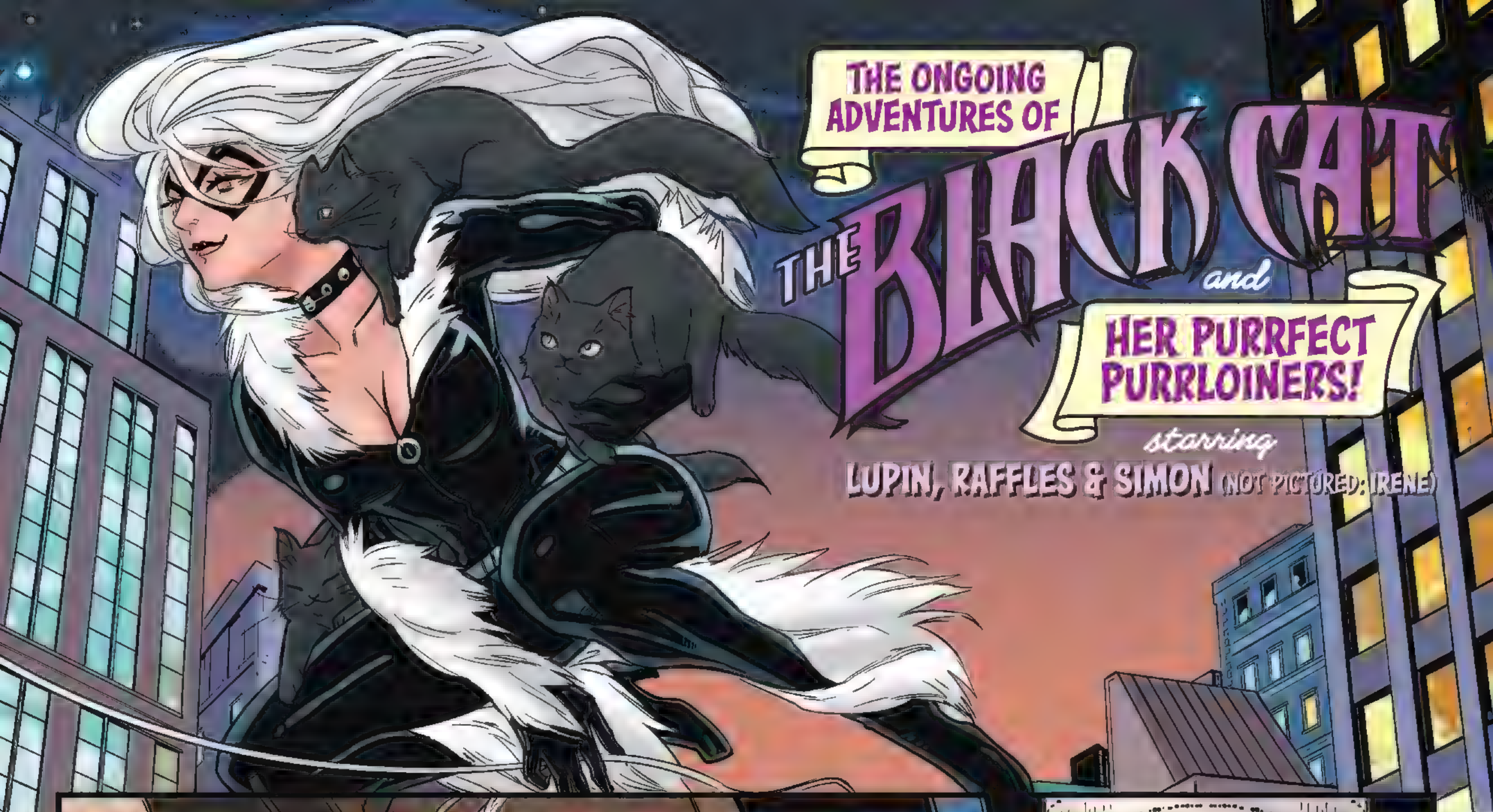
MACKENZIE,
TYLER

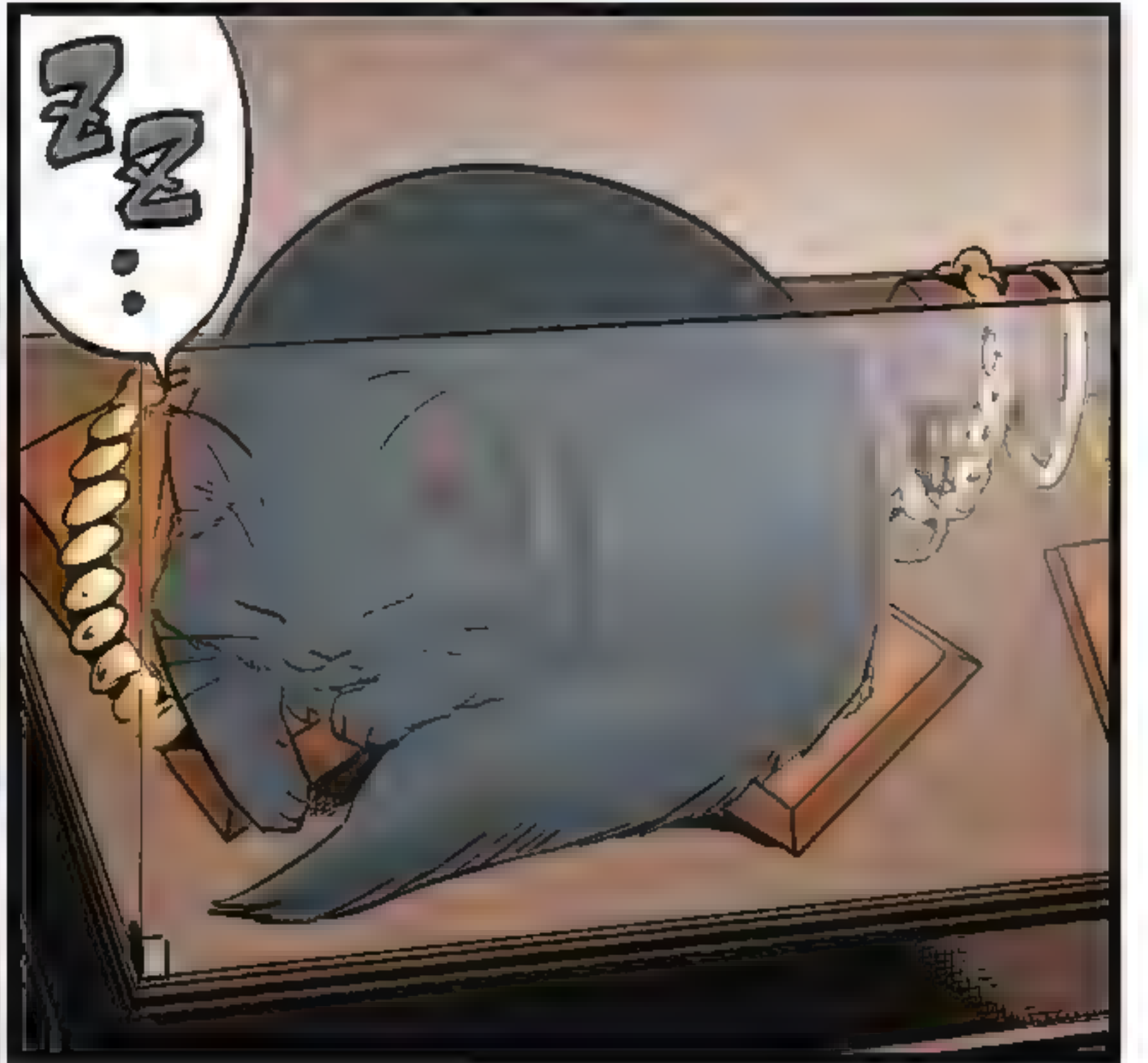
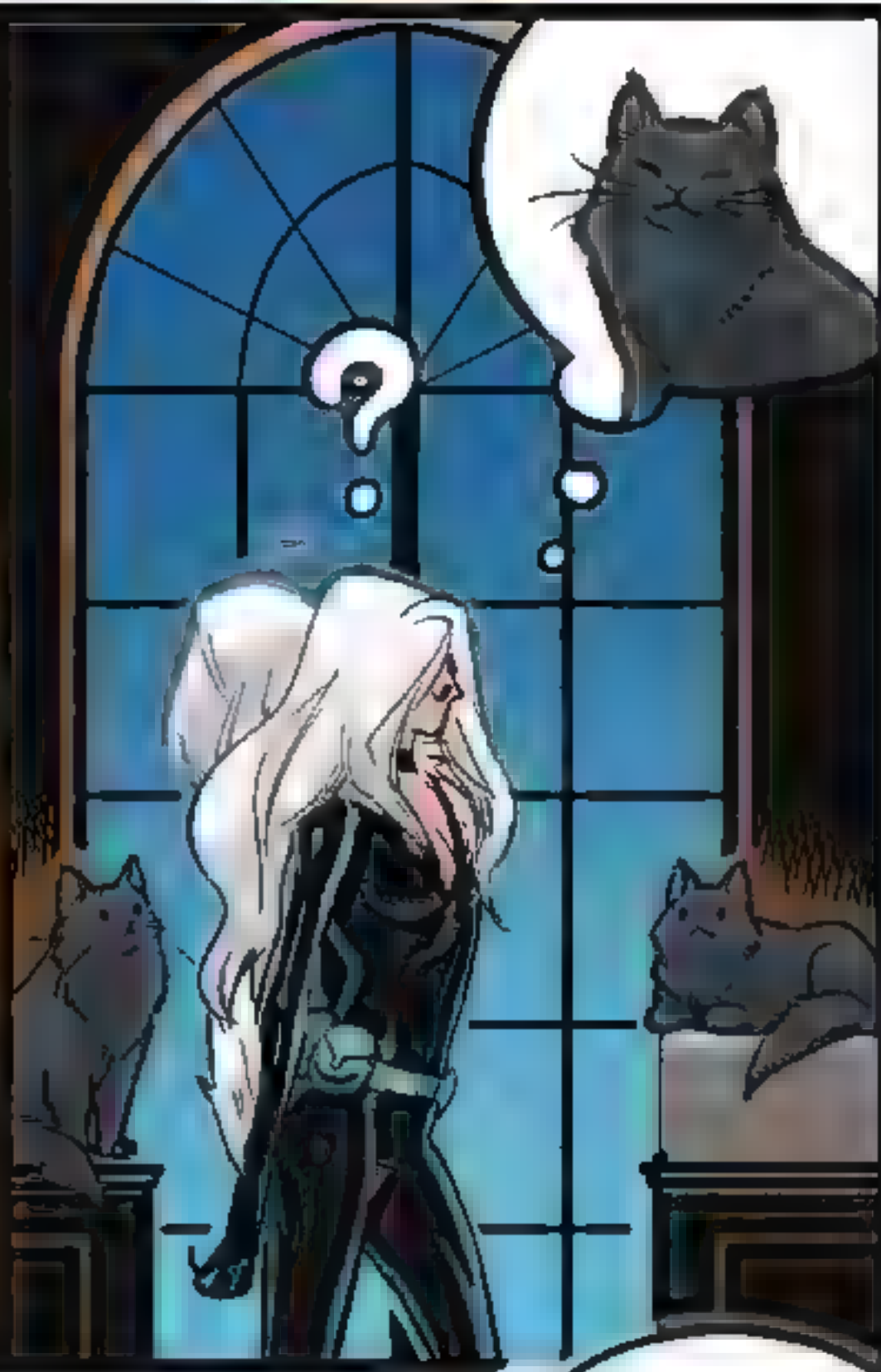
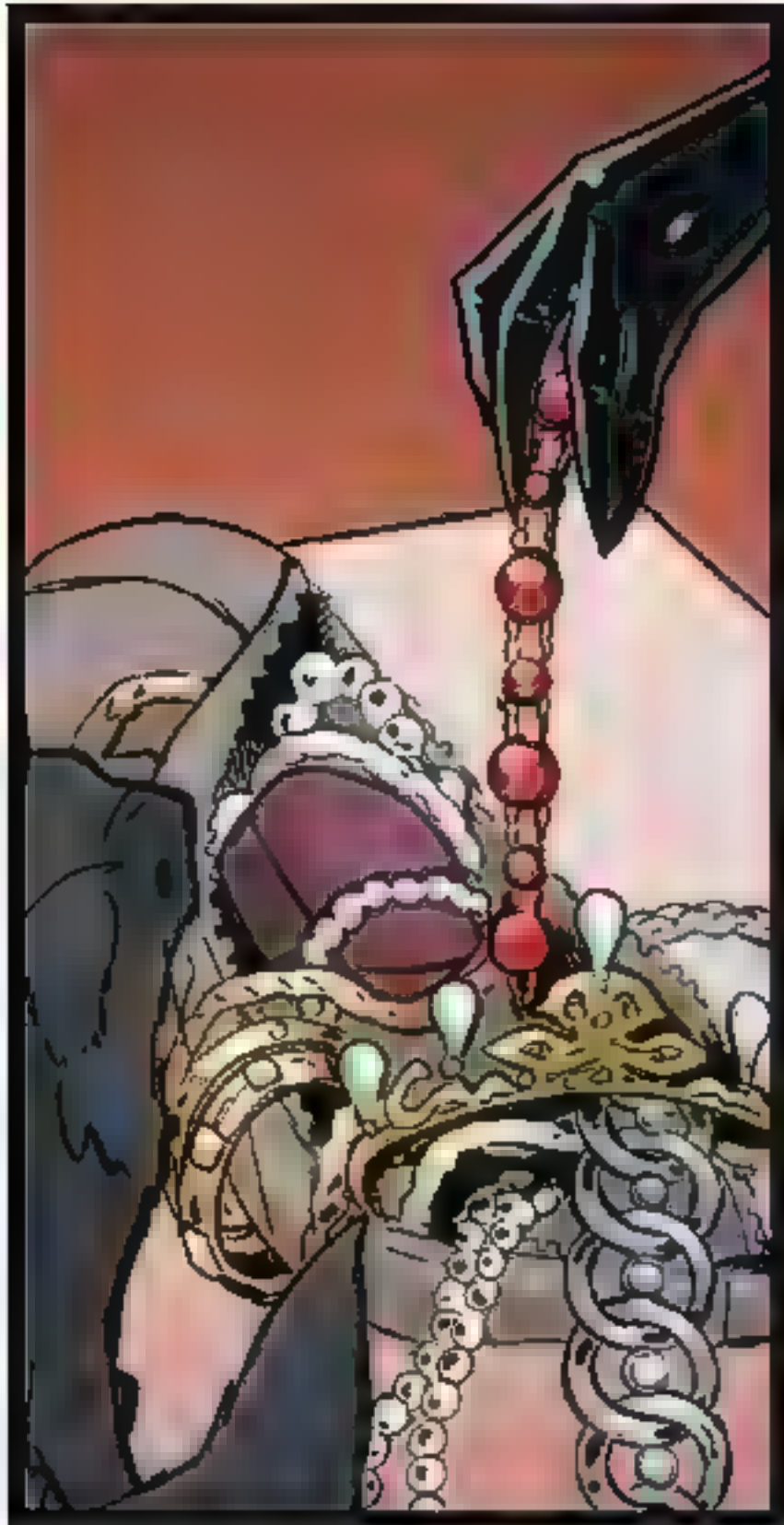
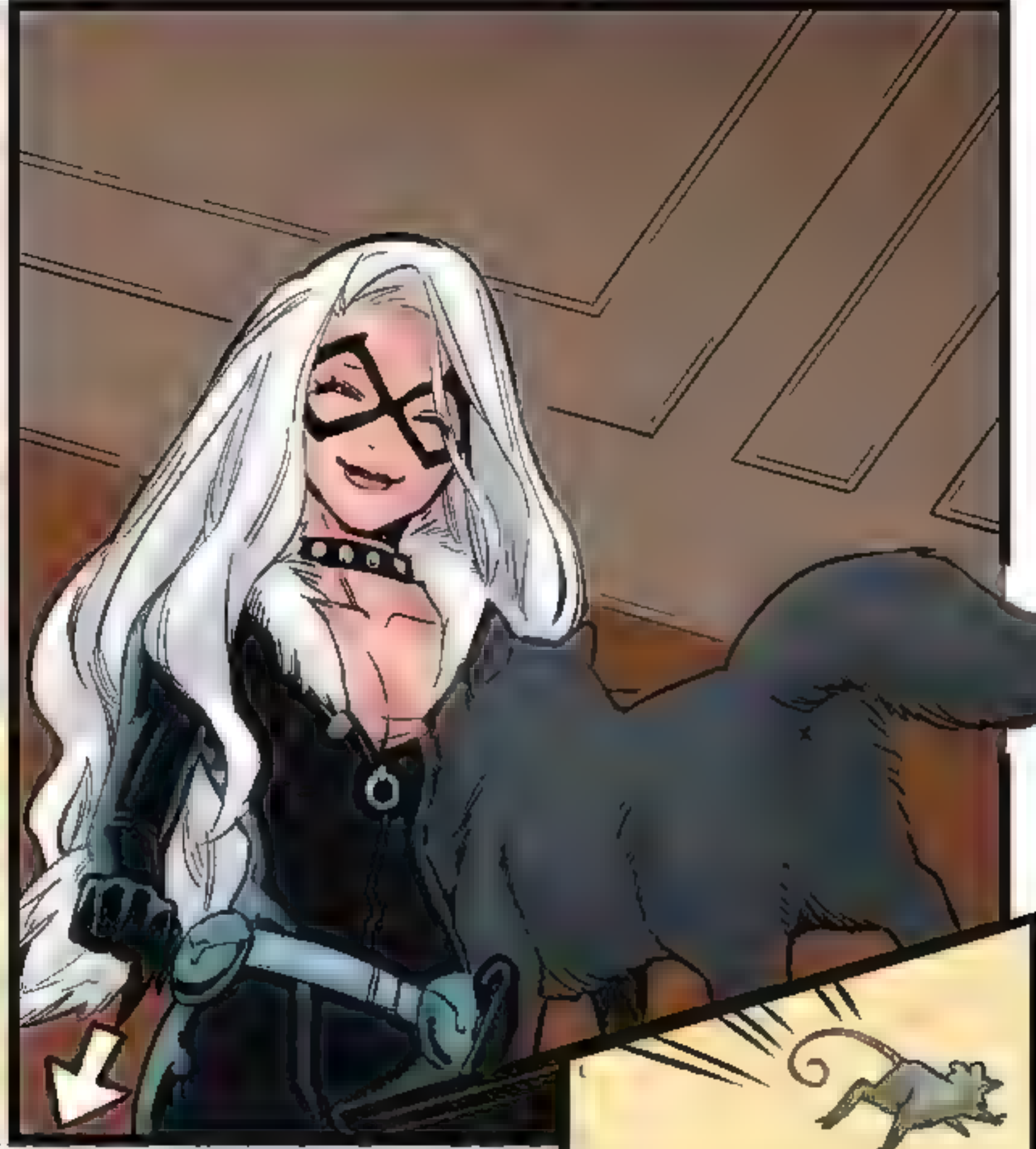
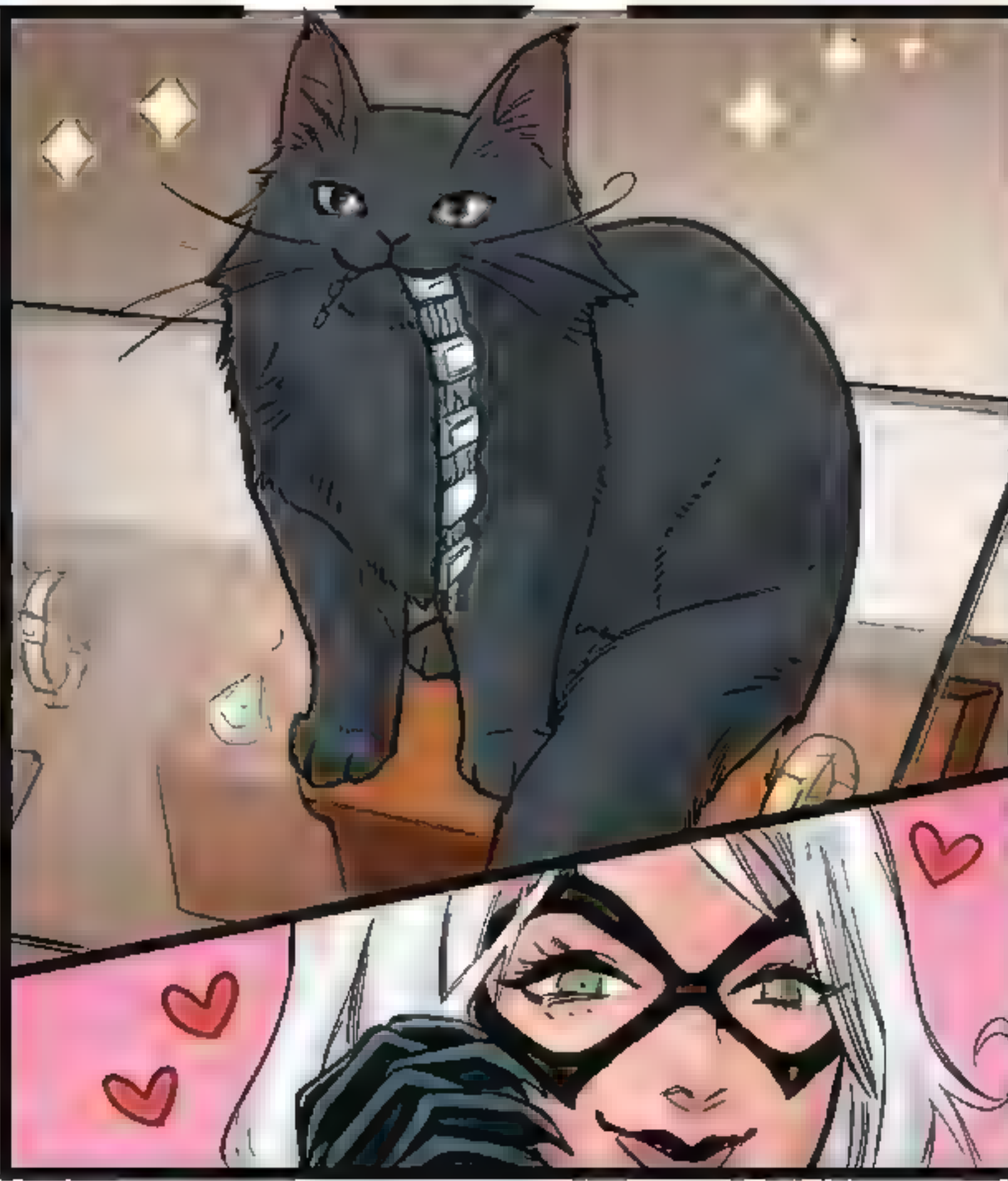


CHESSMAN,
MITCHELL



OGILVIE,
THOMAS





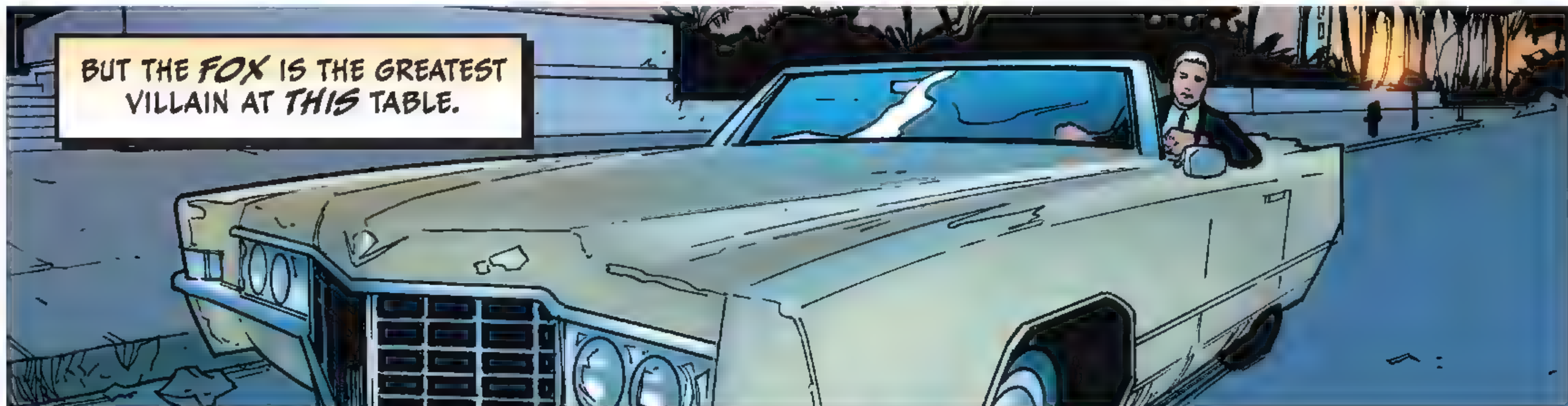


CONSIDER
THE FOX.



ALONE, PLAYING BACCARAT
WITH ONE OF THE MOST
BLACKHEARTED VILLAINS HISTORY
HAS EVER PRODUCED.

THE
IMPALER.
THE
DRAGON.
OLD VLAD
HIMSELF.



BUT THE FOX IS THE GREATEST
VILLAIN AT THIS TABLE.



BECAUSE THE
FOX IS A MERE
MORTAL--

--AND I'M GOING
TO ROB DRACULA
BLIND.

WHO AM I?



DARLING,
I'M--

The
BLACK FOX
in
Leaving
MIAMI



MISTER...
MORRIS.

MURRAY,
MY DEAR FELLOW.
THOMAS J.
MURRAY.

NOT MY NAME,
OF COURSE.

OF COURSE.
YOU SEEM TO HAVE
HAD *QUITE* THE
STREAK OF LUCK
THIS EVENING.

NATURALLY,
I HAVE BEEN CHEATING
SHAMELESSLY.

FORTUNE
APPEARS TO
HAVE ME IN HER
GOOD GRACES,
CERTAINLY.

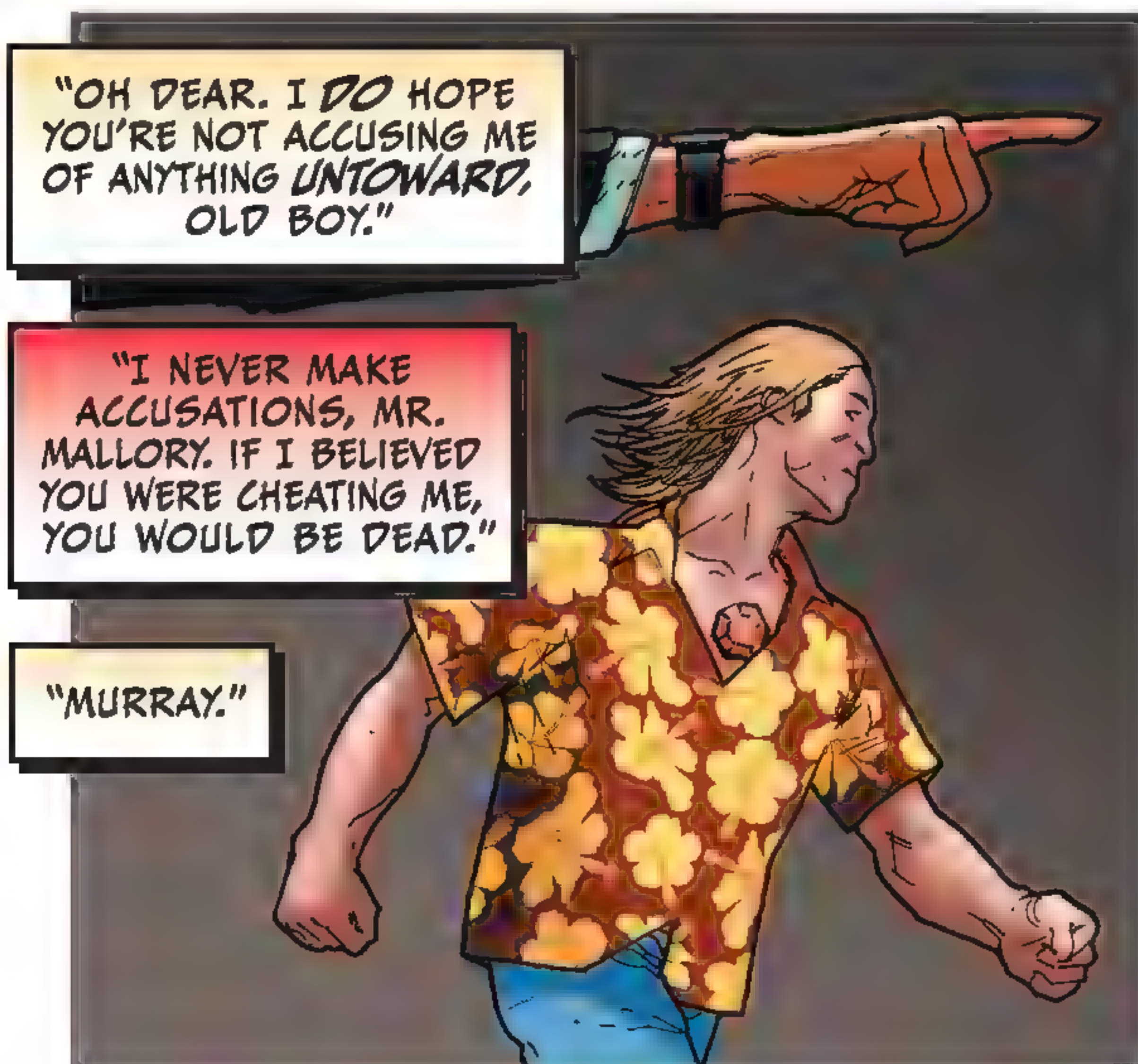


HMM.

MOST
CURIOUSLY
FORTUNATE,
I HAVE BEEN
FINDING.

THE THING ABOUT DRACULA
IS, HE'S A *FUNNY* OLD BIRD.
HAS A CODE OF HONOR,
WOULD *NEVER* STOOP TO
CHEATING AT CARDS.

I STOOP *MOST* HAPPILY
AND AS *FREQUENTLY* AS
POSSIBLE, OF COURSE, BUT
HE'S A BLOOD-DRINKING
IMMORTAL LUNATIC, SO
LET'S NOT FORGET WHO
THE REAL MONSTER IS HERE.



"OH DEAR. I *DO* HOPE
YOU'RE NOT ACCUSING ME
OF ANYTHING *UNTOWARD*,
OLD BOY."

"I NEVER MAKE
ACCUSATIONS, MR.
MALLORY. IF I BELIEVED
YOU WERE CHEATING ME,
YOU WOULD BE DEAD."

"MURRAY."



OF COURSE.
HOWEVER, YOUR
LUCK SEEMS TO
HAVE *ABANDONED*
YOU IN THIS
CASE.

I HAVE *NINE*,
WHILE YOU ARE
SHOWING ONLY
THREE.

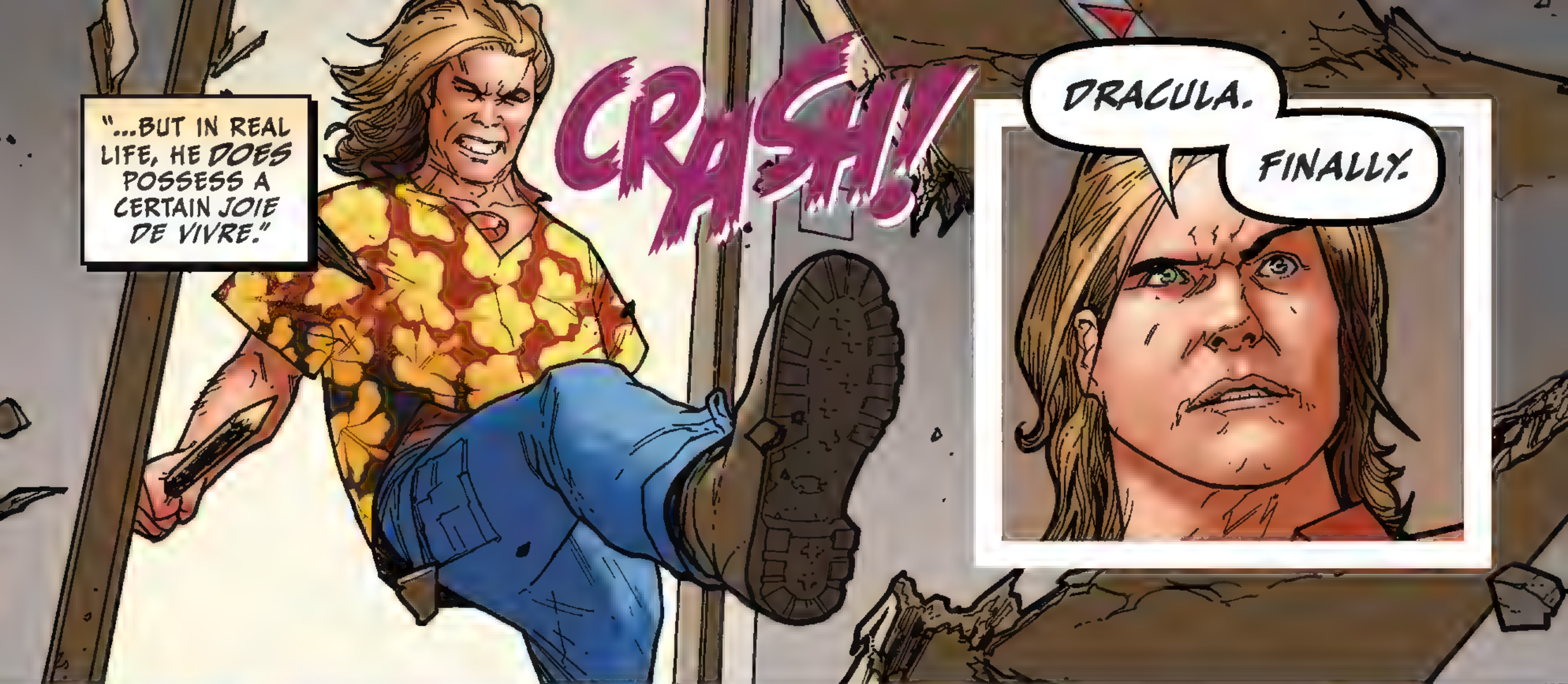


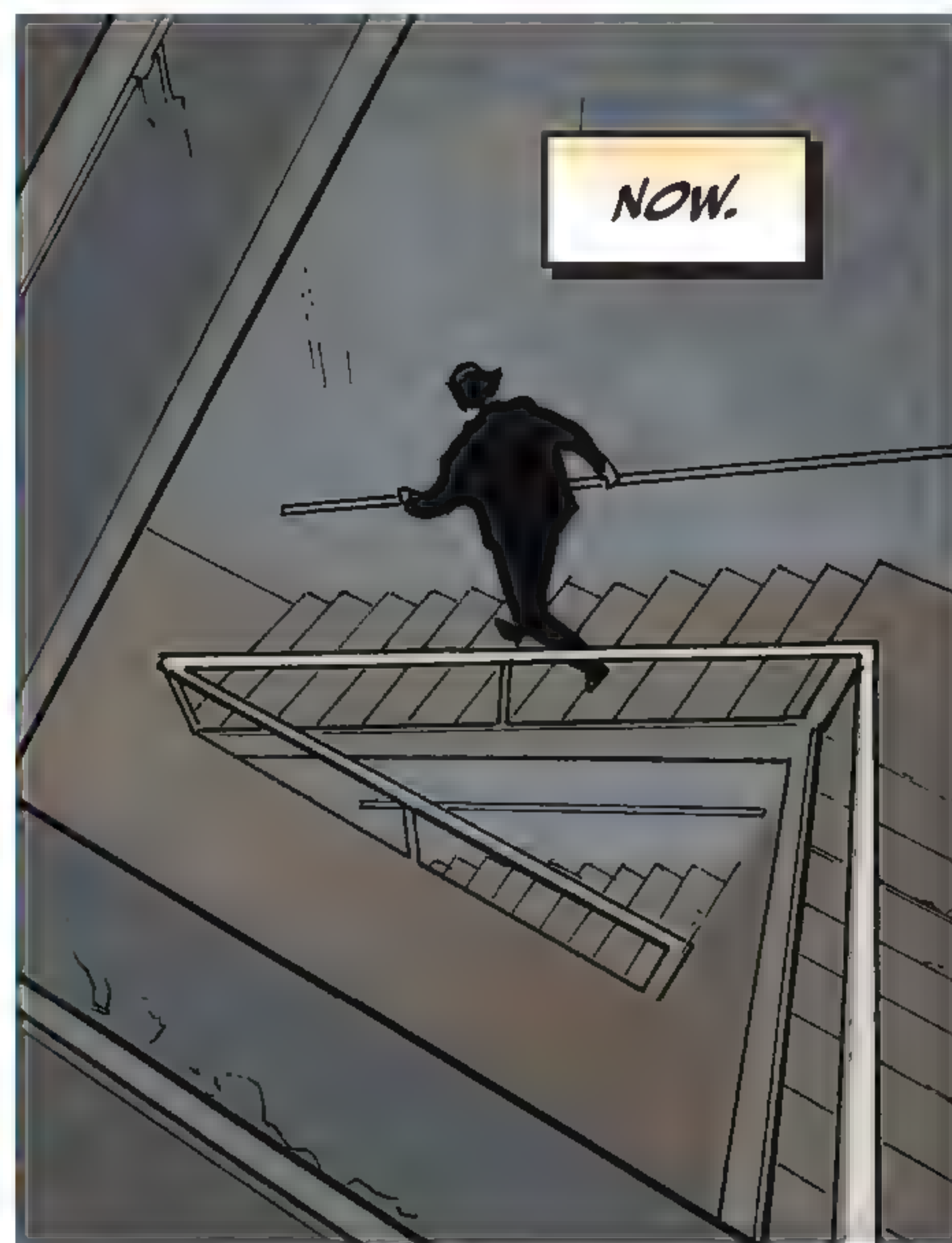
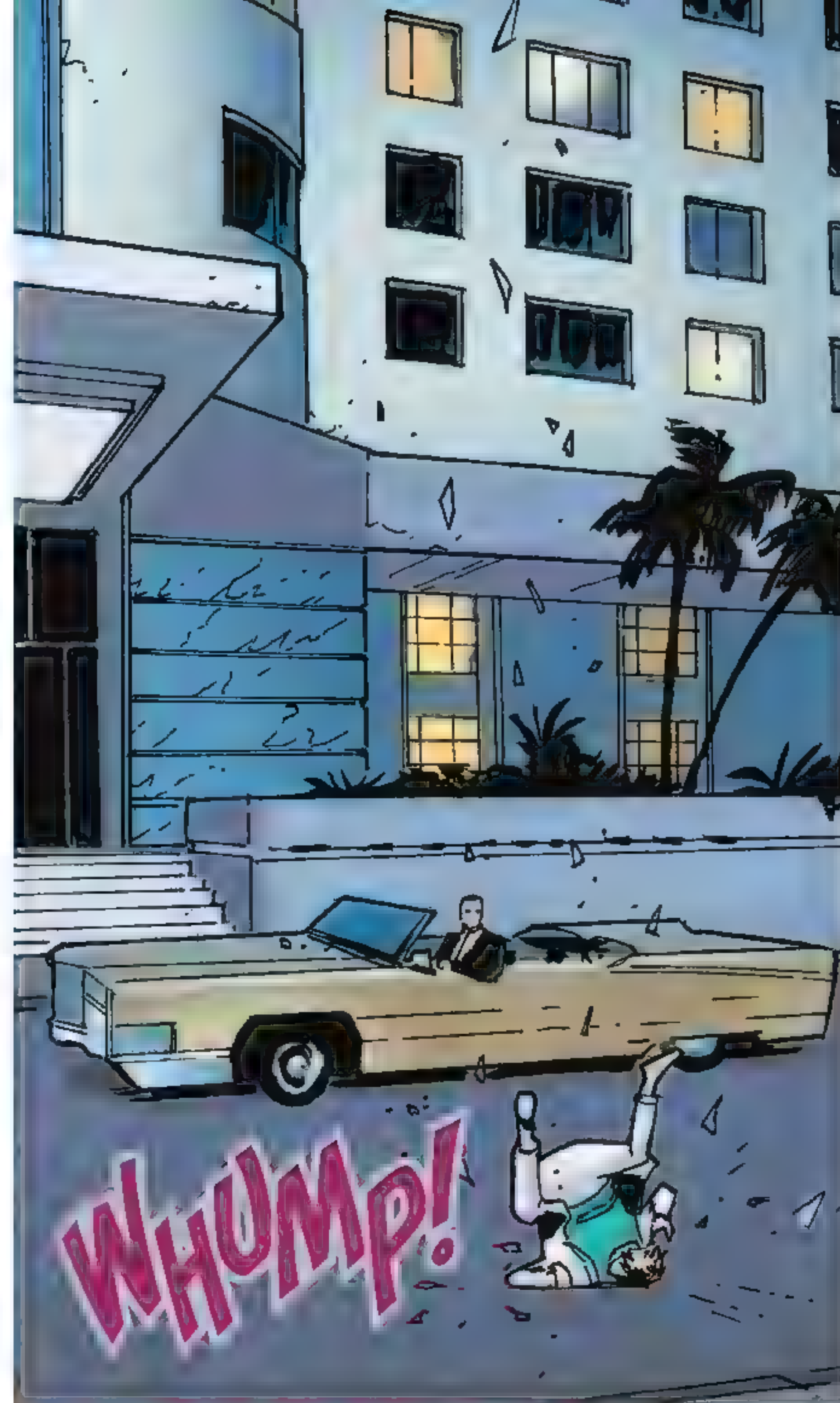
PITY.
I HAD HOPED
FOR THE KING OF
DIAMONDS.

THE KING OF
DIAMONDS? HE
IS *WORTHLESS*
IN BACCARAT.



"IN BACCARAT,
MOST CERTAINLY..."

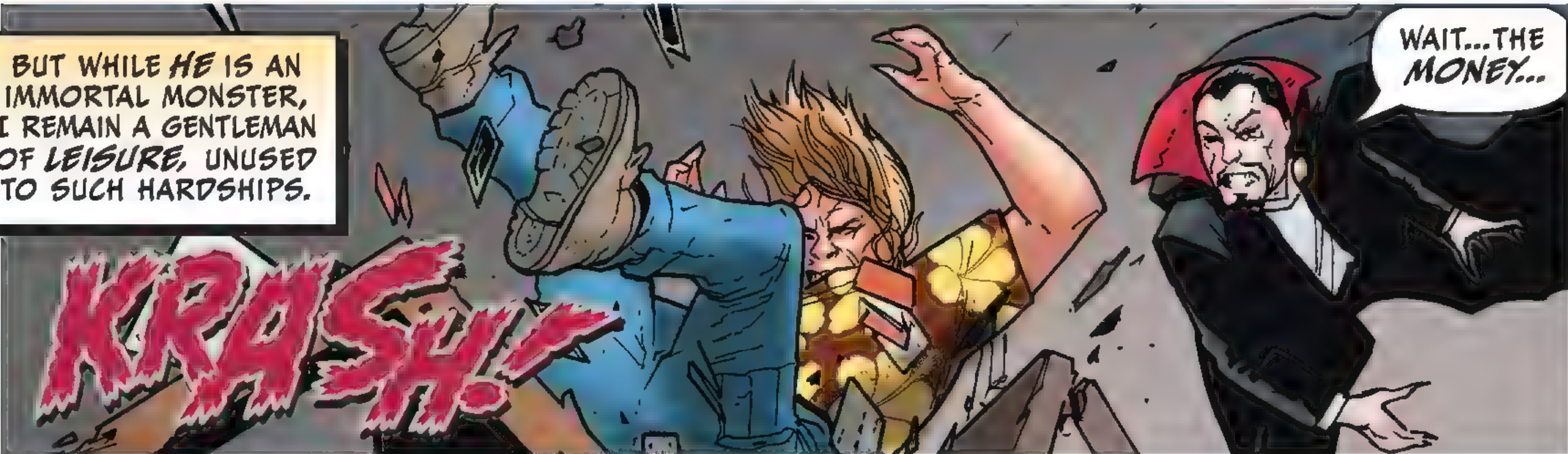




NOT THAT I THINK
THAT VAMPIRE WAS
REALLY DONE IN BY
A TERMINAL VELOCITY
INTRODUCTION TO THE
PARKING LOT...



BUT WHILE **HE** IS AN
IMMORTAL MONSTER,
I REMAIN A GENTLEMAN
OF **LEISURE**, UNUSED
TO SUCH HARDSHIPS.





WALTER, THE WORKING-CLASS BOY WITH A CHIP ON HIS SHOULDER, AND ALL HIS CLEVER IDEAS.



CASTILLO, THE WILD BOY, WAYWARD SCION OF DISGRACED NOBILITY.



BOYS.

BOSS.

BOSS.



THAT'S MIAMI *DUSTED*. AFTER THIS CAPER, THIS TOWN WILL BE TOO HOT FOR THE LIKES OF US.

HKKhh...



RIO NEXT, PERHAPS. OR HONG KONG... NOW *THERE* IS A TOWN.

NEW YORK, SIR.

HMM?



ME AND CASS--

"CASS AND I," DEAR BOY.

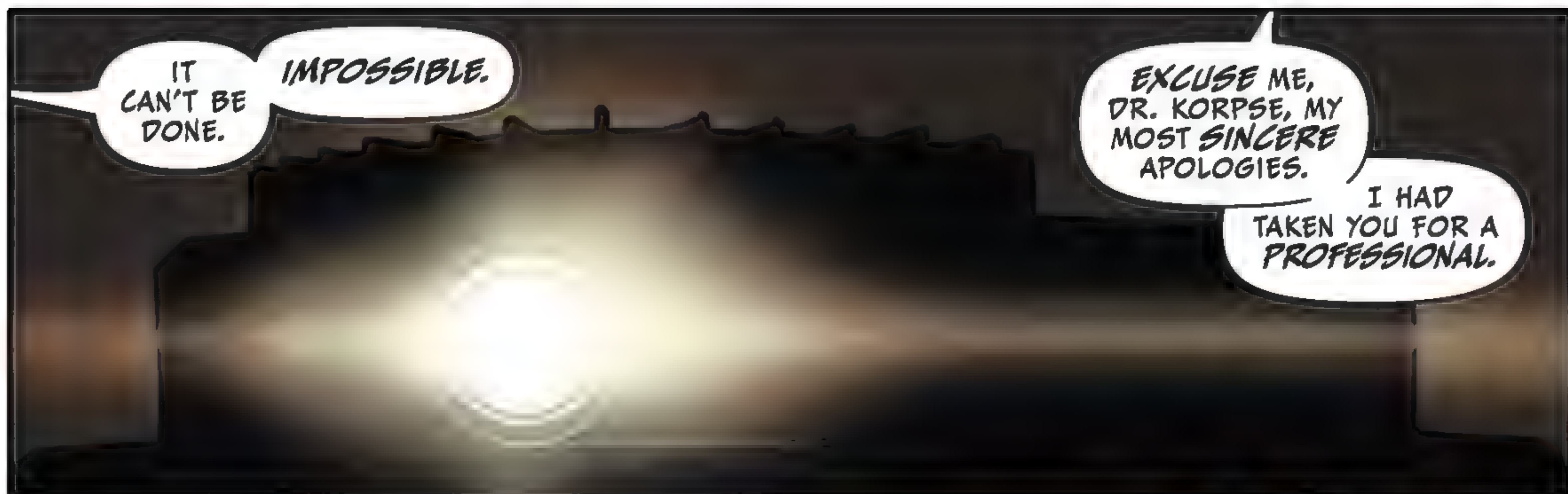
CASS AND I HAVE BEEN TALKING, BOSS. WE APPRECIATE ALL YOU'VE DONE FOR BOTH OF US--





FOR IF WE
DON'T OUTFRAN
DRACULA, ALL
THESE LOFTY PLANS
SHALL COME TO
NAUGHT!





IT
CAN'T BE
DONE.

IMPOSSIBLE.

EXCUSE ME,
DR. KORPSE, MY
MOST *SINCERE*
APOLOGIES.

I HAD
TAKEN YOU FOR A
PROFESSIONAL.



AND I HAD
TAKEN *YOU* FOR
SOMEONE WITHOUT
DEMENTIA.

TELL ME, WAS
IT ALL THOSE TIMES
SPIDER-MAN HIT YOU
ON THE HEAD? OR
JUST OLD AGE?

Heh.



SPIDER-MAN?

LET ME
TELL YOU ABOUT
SPIDER-MAN,
YOU LITTLE
PUNK--

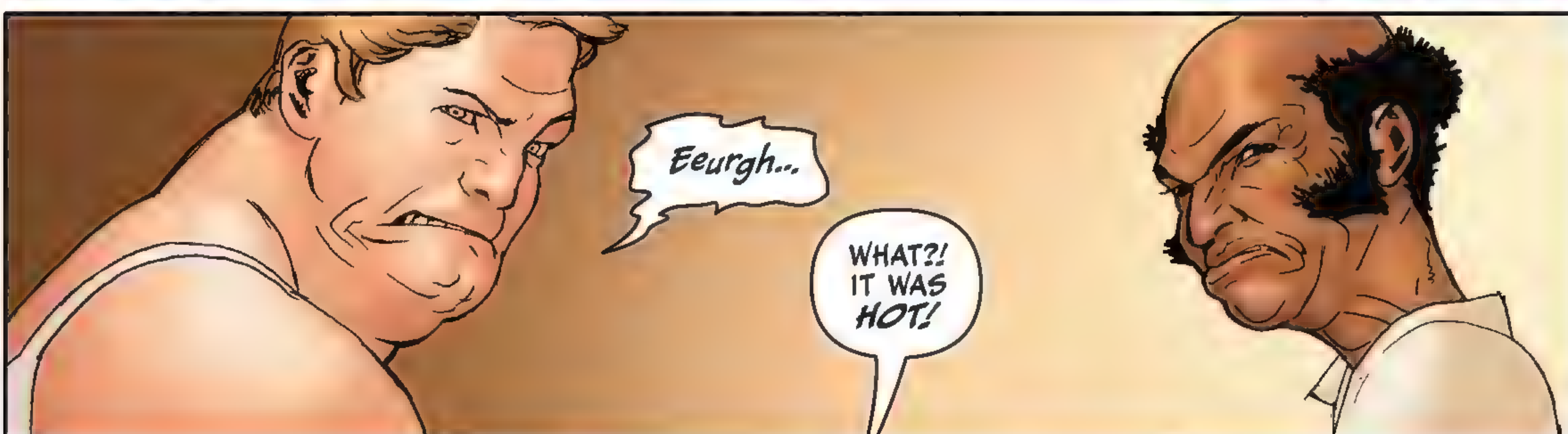


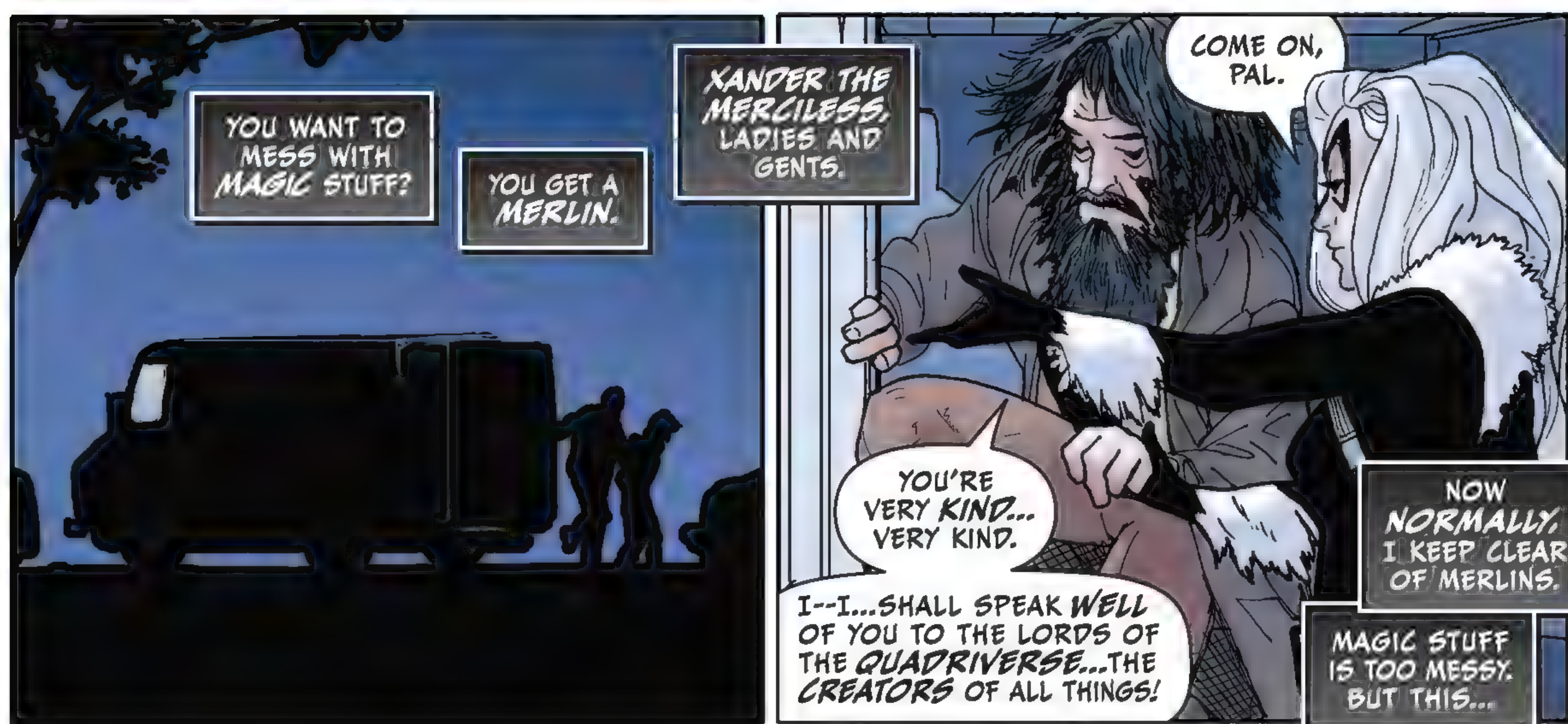
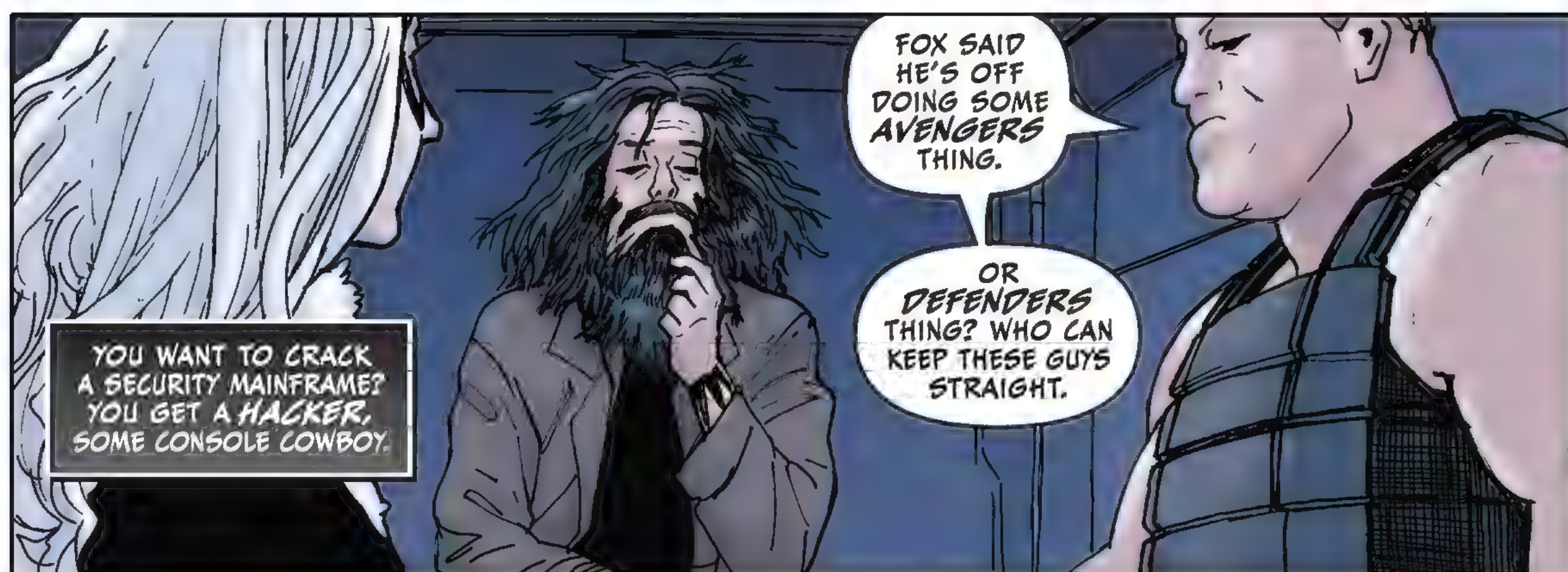
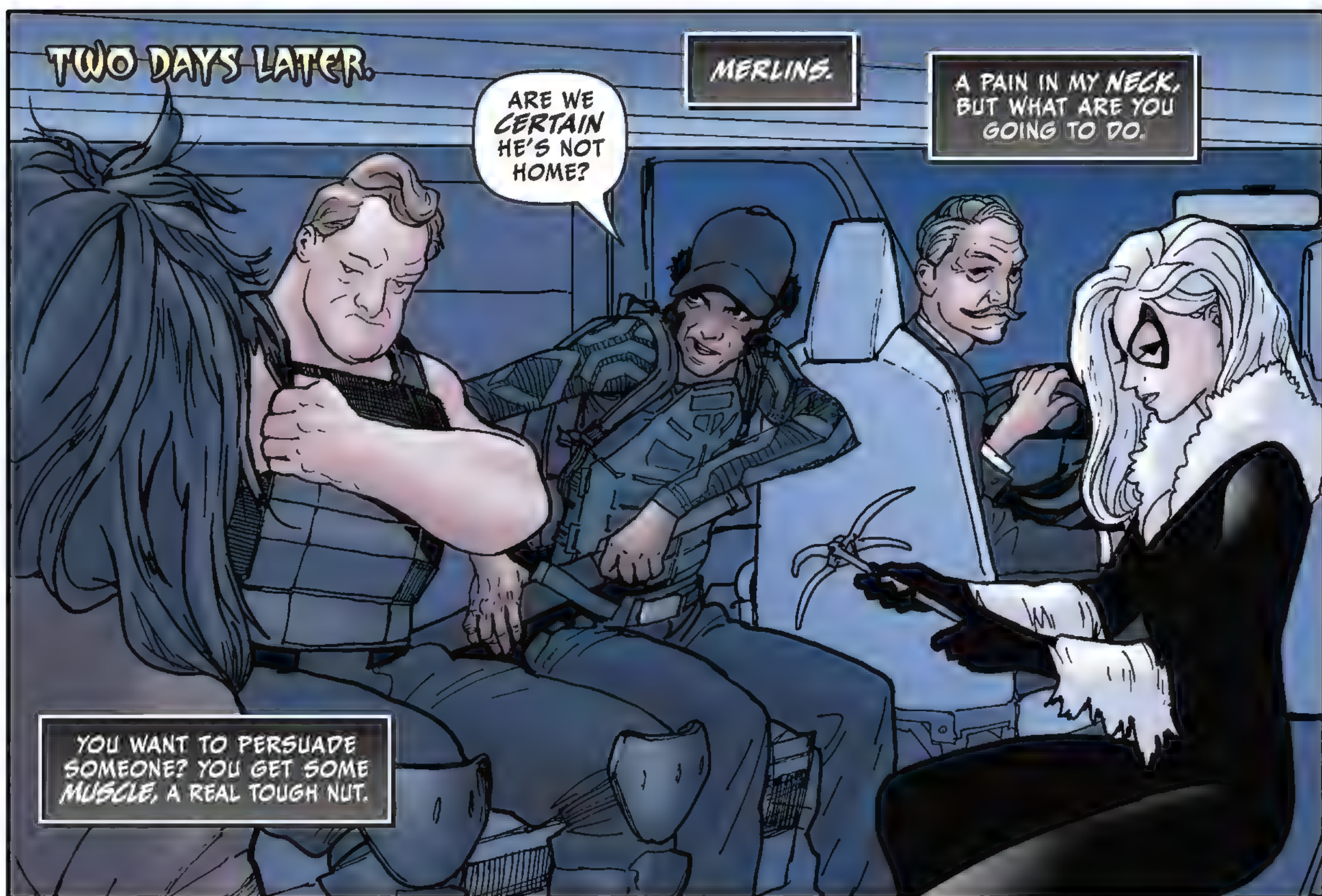
THAT
WALL-CRAWLER?

Pah, *WE*
TOOK DOWN
SPIDER-MAN!

IT'S TRUE.*

Hey!







...WELL.

I DON'T
FIGURE I HAVE
THAT LUXURY
ON THIS JOB.

BOSS.
YOU KNOW I AIN'T
COMPLAINING...

SPIT IT
OUT, BRUNO.

WE DON'T
KNOW THE FOX
FROM NO ONE.
YOU TRUST
HIM?



THE FOX
IS A CROOK,
BRUNO.

BUT
HE'S OUR
KIND OF CROOK.
HE AND I GO
WAY BACK.





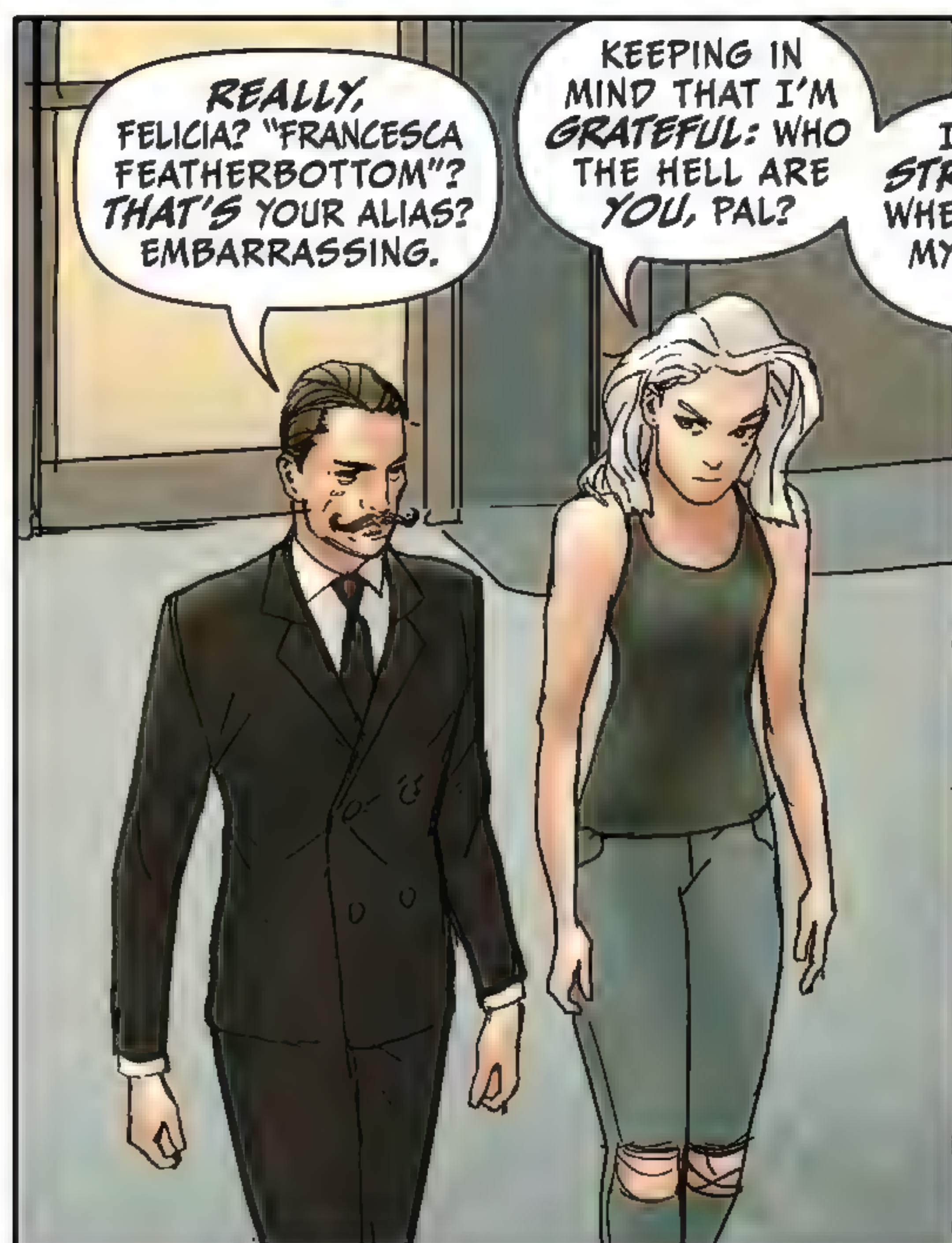


YOU
HEARD ME. YOUR
FATHER. FRANCIS
FEATHERBOTTOM.

STEALING,
FRANCESCA?
STEALING?

YOU'VE
HUMILIATED ME.
COME ALONG
NOW.

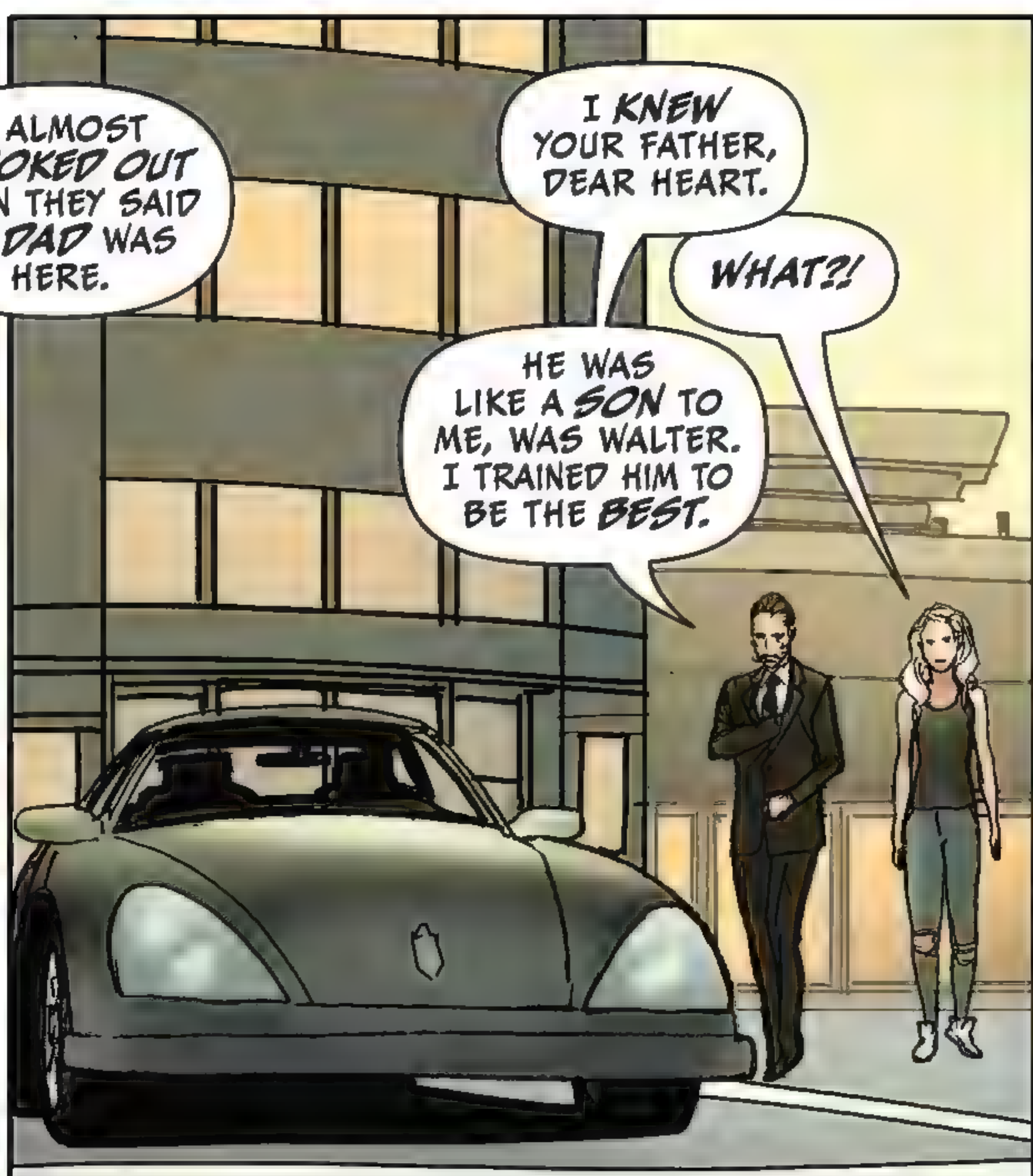
S-SORRY?



REALLY,
FELICIA? "FRANCESCA
FEATHERBOTTOM"?
THAT'S YOUR ALIAS?
EMBARRASSING.

KEEPING IN
MIND THAT I'M
GRATEFUL: WHO
THE HELL ARE
YOU, PAL?

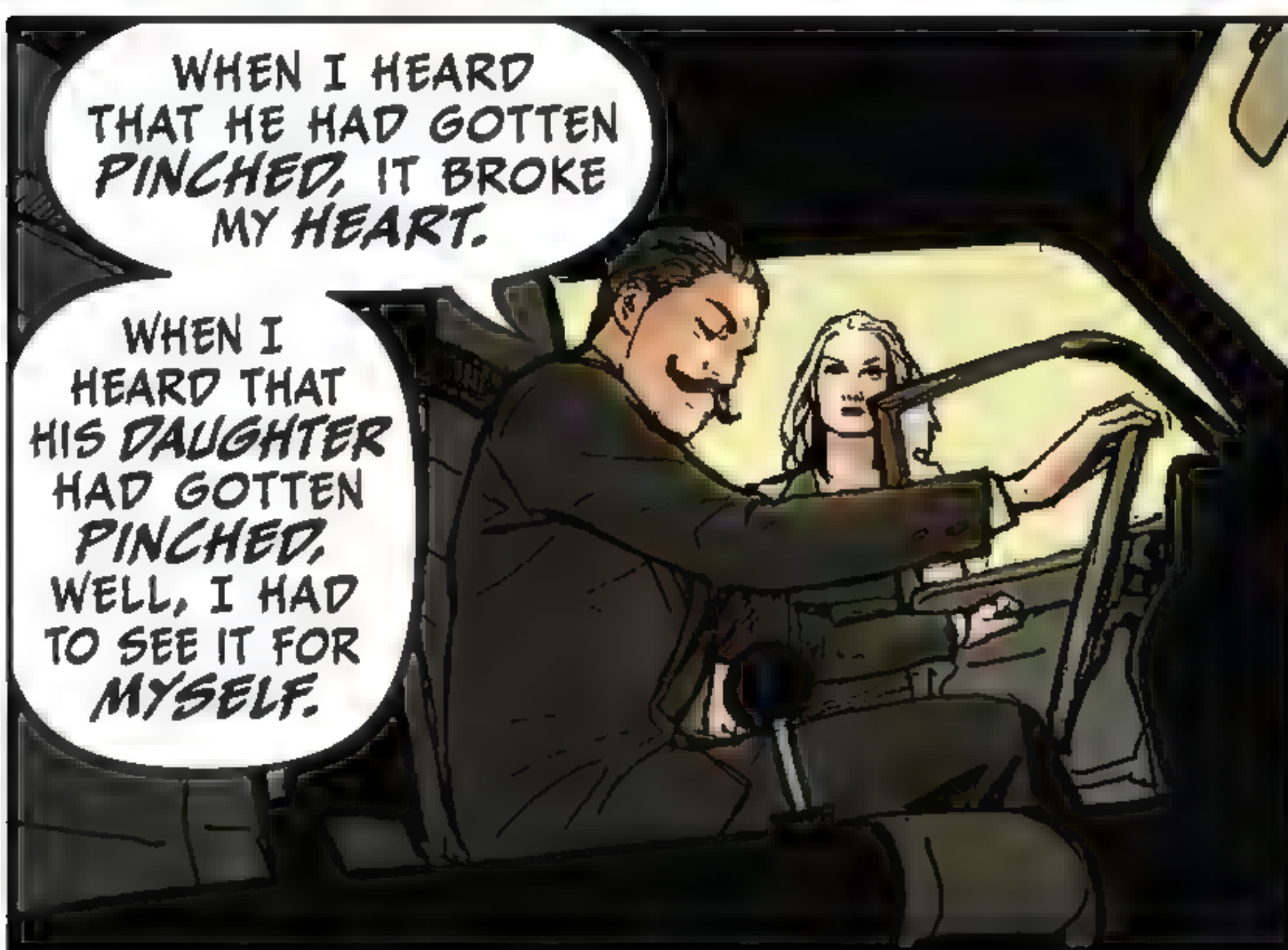
I ALMOST
STROKED OUT
WHEN THEY SAID
MY DAD WAS
HERE.



I KNEW
YOUR FATHER,
DEAR HEART.

WHAT?!

HE WAS
LIKE A SON TO
ME, WAS WALTER.
I TRAINED HIM TO
BE THE BEST.



WHEN I HEARD
THAT HE HAD GOTTEN
PINCHED, IT BROKE
MY HEART.

WHEN I
HEARD THAT
HIS DAUGHTER
HAD GOTTEN
PINCHED,
WELL, I HAD
TO SEE IT FOR
MYSELF.

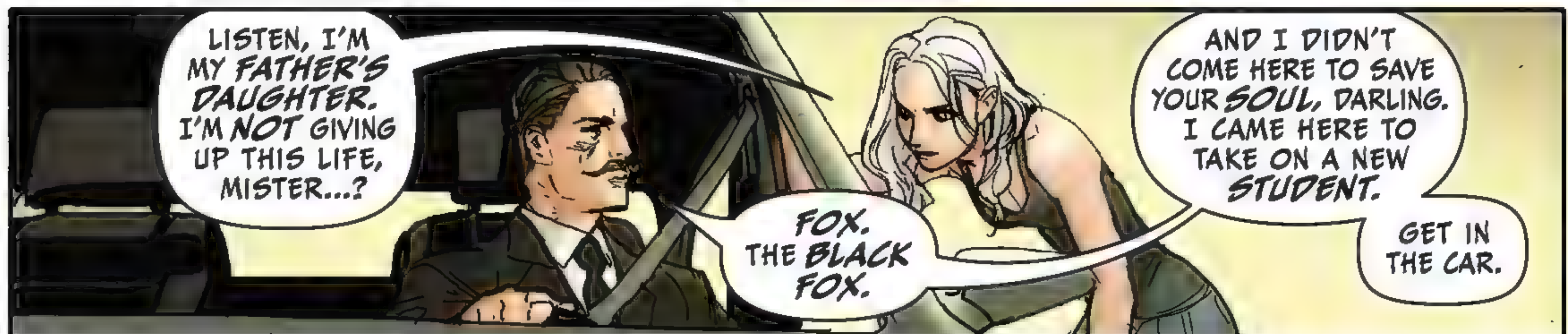


WELL,
THANKS FOR THE
ASSIST.

I'LL PAY
YOU BACK
FOR THE
BAIL--

MY DEAR,
I DON'T
WANT YOUR
MONEY.

WHAT I
WANT IS TO KEEP
WALTER HARDY'S
DAUGHTER OUT
OF PRISON.



LISTEN, I'M
MY FATHER'S
DAUGHTER.
I'M NOT GIVING
UP THIS LIFE,
MISTER...?

FOX.
THE BLACK
FOX.

AND I DIDN'T
COME HERE TO SAVE
YOUR SOUL, DARLING.
I CAME HERE TO
TAKE ON A NEW
STUDENT.

GET IN
THE CAR.



XANDER THE
MERCILESS.

mmm mmm
mm mm mmm
mmmm

CLAIMS THAT HE WAS CREATED TO
CONQUER DOCTOR STRANGE
BY THE MYSTERIOUS SIXTEEN
CREATORS FROM BEYOND
THE QUADRIVERSE.

SAYS HE'S ATTUNED TO
STRANGE'S VIBRATIONAL
FREQUENCY, CAN FEEL
OUT HIS MAGICS.



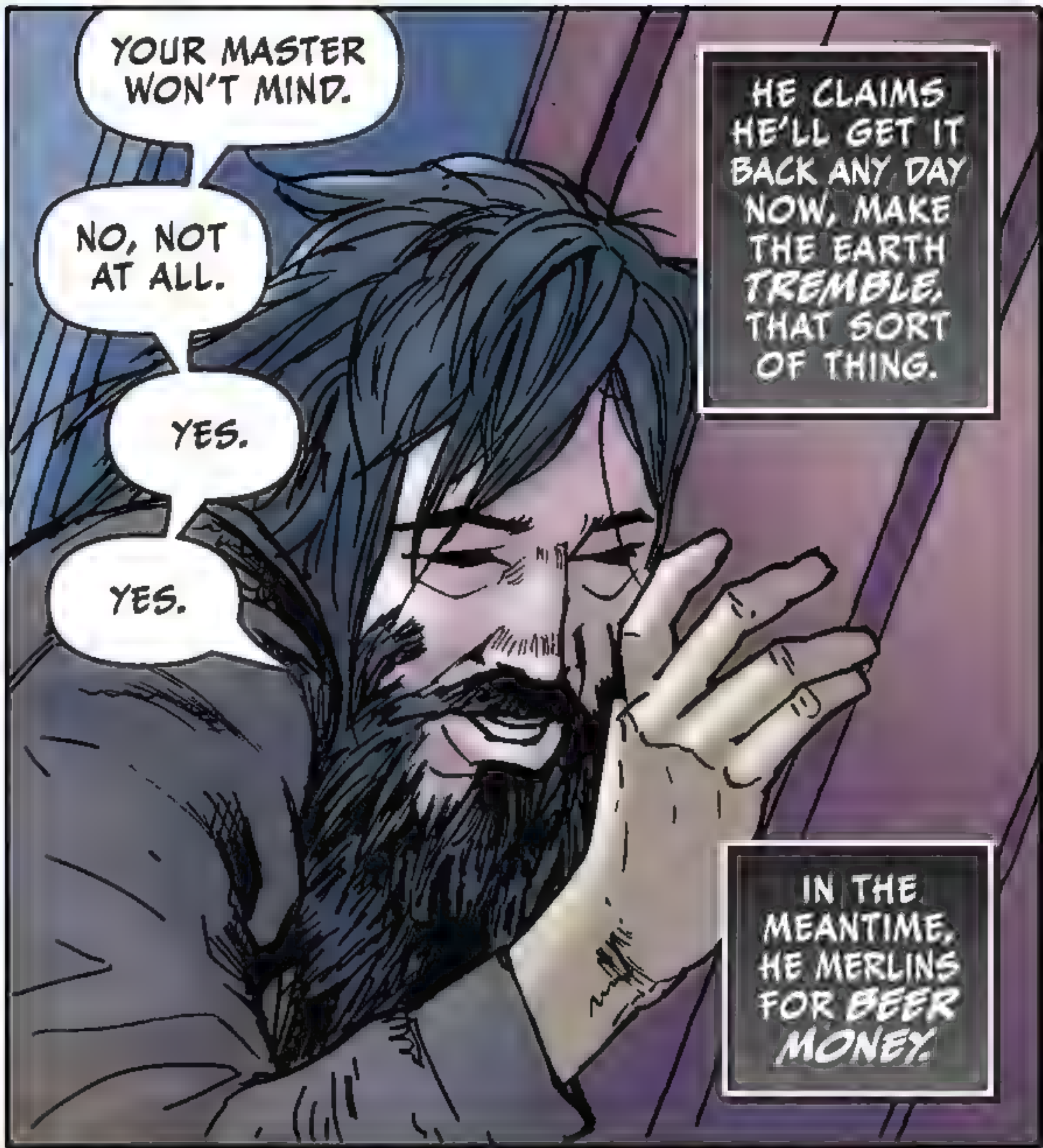
DIDN'T HELP
HIM MUCH.

I GUESS
STRANGE PUNCHED
HIM OUT, TOOK
HIS STAR-STONE,
CUT OFF MOST OF
HIS POWER.

WHILE
WE'RE
YOUNG!

OH YES.
HELLO.

HELLO,
YES.
PLEASE.



YOUR MASTER
WON'T MIND.

NO, NOT
AT ALL.

YES.

YES.

HE CLAIMS
HE'LL GET IT
BACK ANY DAY
NOW, MAKE
THE EARTH
TREMBLE,
THAT SORT
OF THING.

IN THE
MEANTIME,
HE MERLINS
FOR BEER
MONEY.



HE SEEMS LARGELY
HARMLESS, BUT
MAGIC MAKES THIS
CAT CAUTIOUS.

BRUNO?

BOSS.

IF OUR PAL GETS...
SQUIRRELLY--

--YOU MAKE
SURE TO
GIVE HIM HIS
MEDICINE.
BEFORE
THINGS GET
OUT OF
HAND.



YOU
GOT IT,
BOSS.

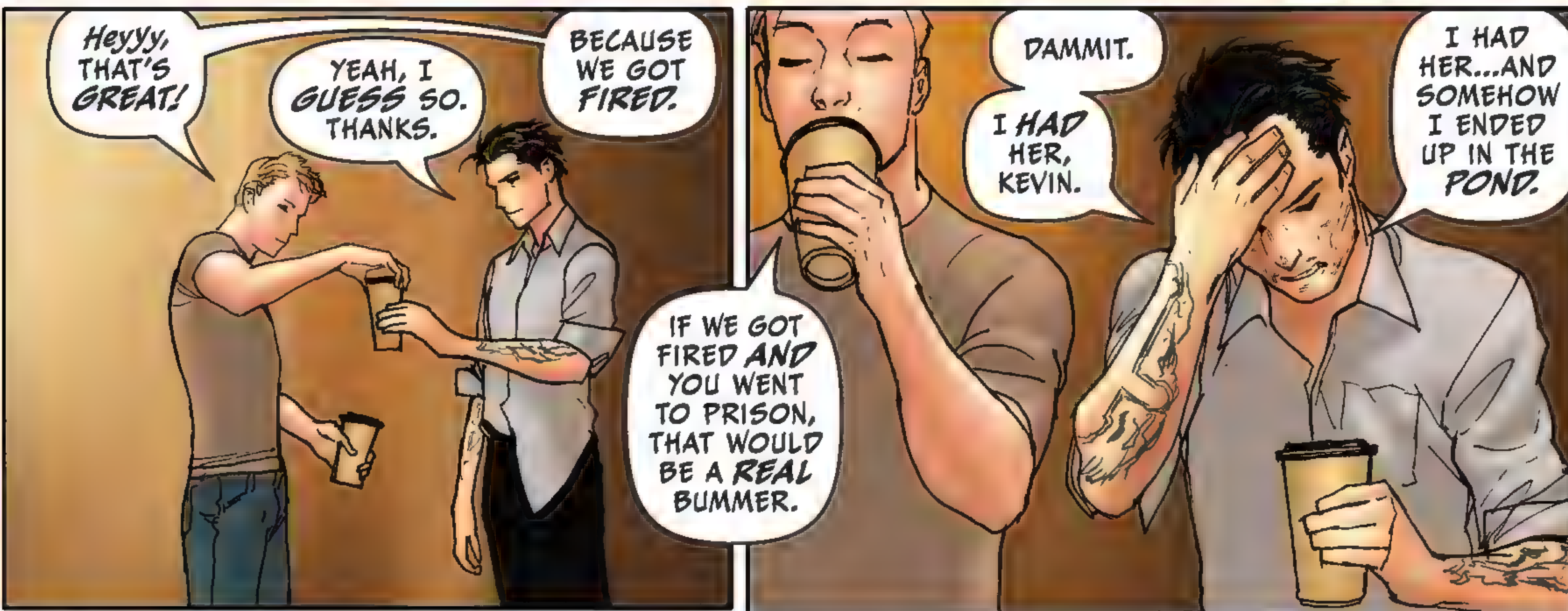
GOT A
.357 MAGNUM
PRESCRIPTION
RIGHT HERE.

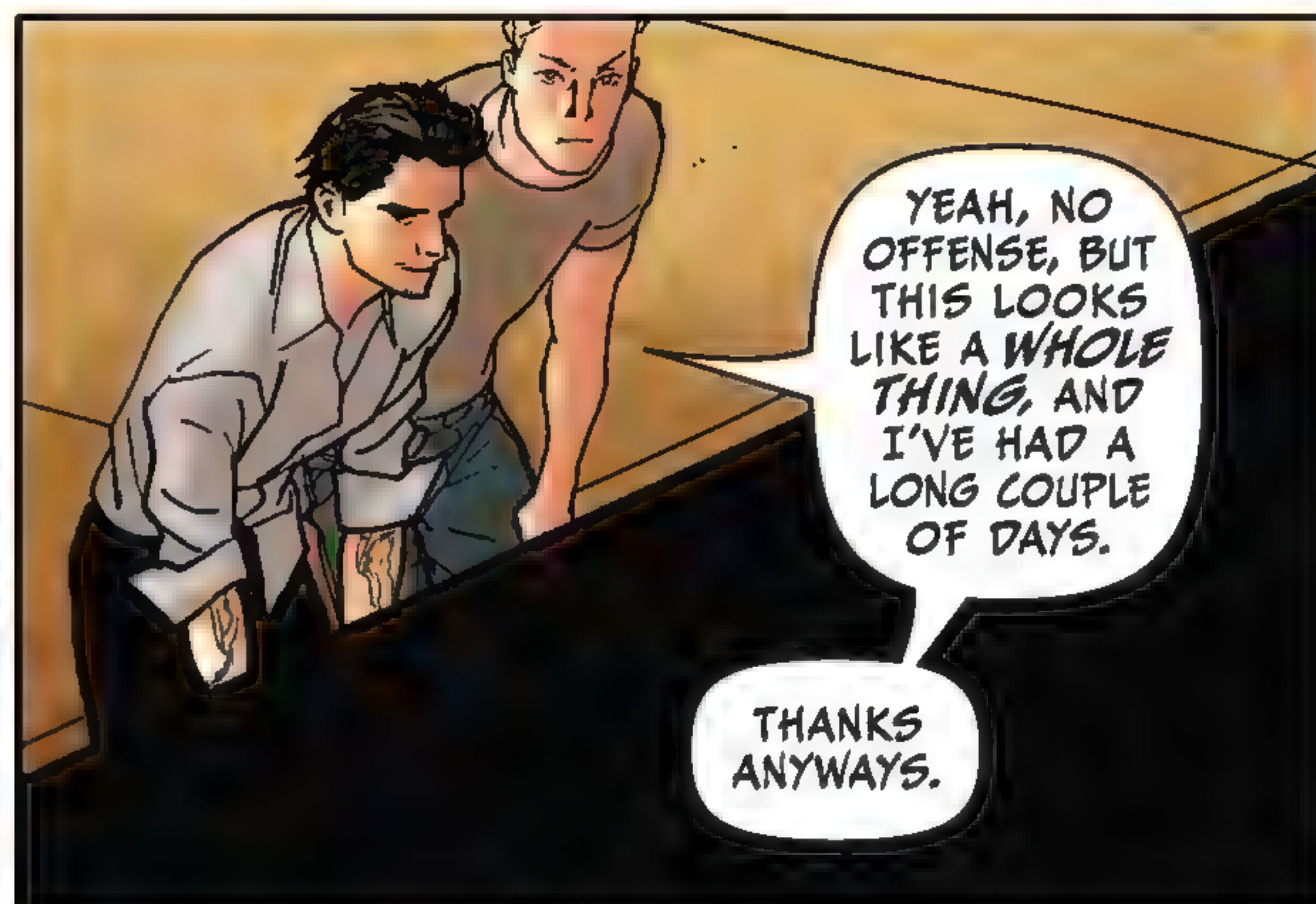
THANK YOU,
FRIEND.



OKAY,
BOYS.

LET'S GO
RIP OFF
DOCTOR
STRANGE.







WE
GOOD,
XANDER?

OH YES,
YES.

YES. HE'S
ALL AROUND.
HIS MAGIC. HIS
SIGNATURE.

YES.
Oh YES.

I'M
ATTUNED TO IT
COMPLETELY.

Ughh...

YOU CAN
GET US TO THE
TROPHY ROOM?
KEEP THE HOUSE'S
DEFENSES
QUIET?

Oh YES,
YES, YES.



YOU
GOOD,
DOC?

NO. THIS ISN'T
A HEIST. THIS IS...
DUNGEONS AND
DRAGONS. IT'S
RIDICULOUS.



CHIN UP, EYES
OPEN, FINGER ON
THE TRIGGER, DOC.
BELIEVE IN GETTING
PAID, BABY.

HE'S NOT
WRONG.

I'M KEEPING A BRAVE
FACE FOR MY CREW,
BUT THIS RIGHT HERE
IS UNDER SIEGE 2:

DARK
TERRITORY.



Hey-Hey,
GIRL!

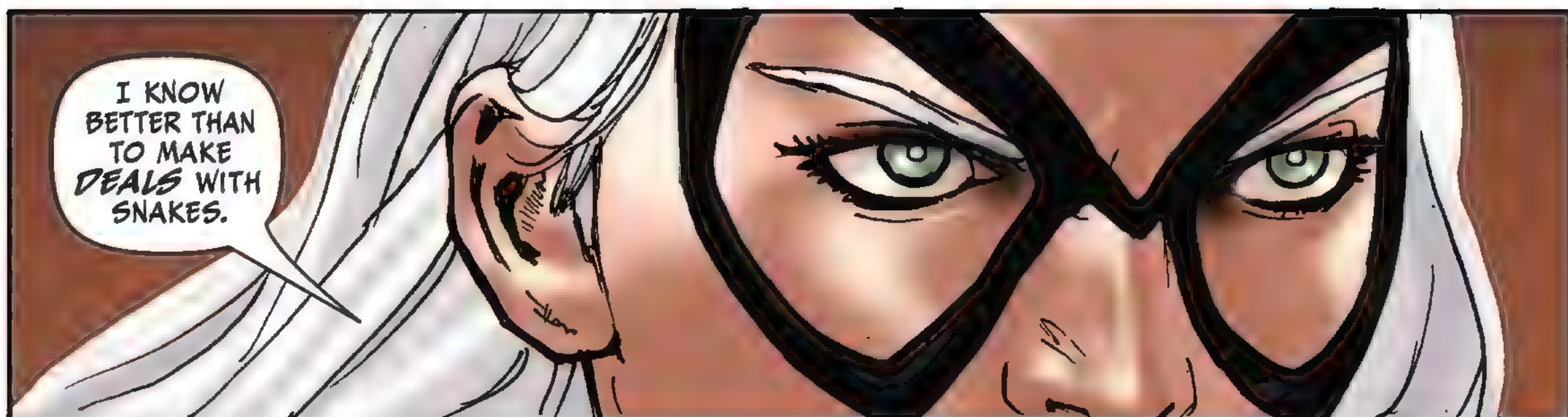
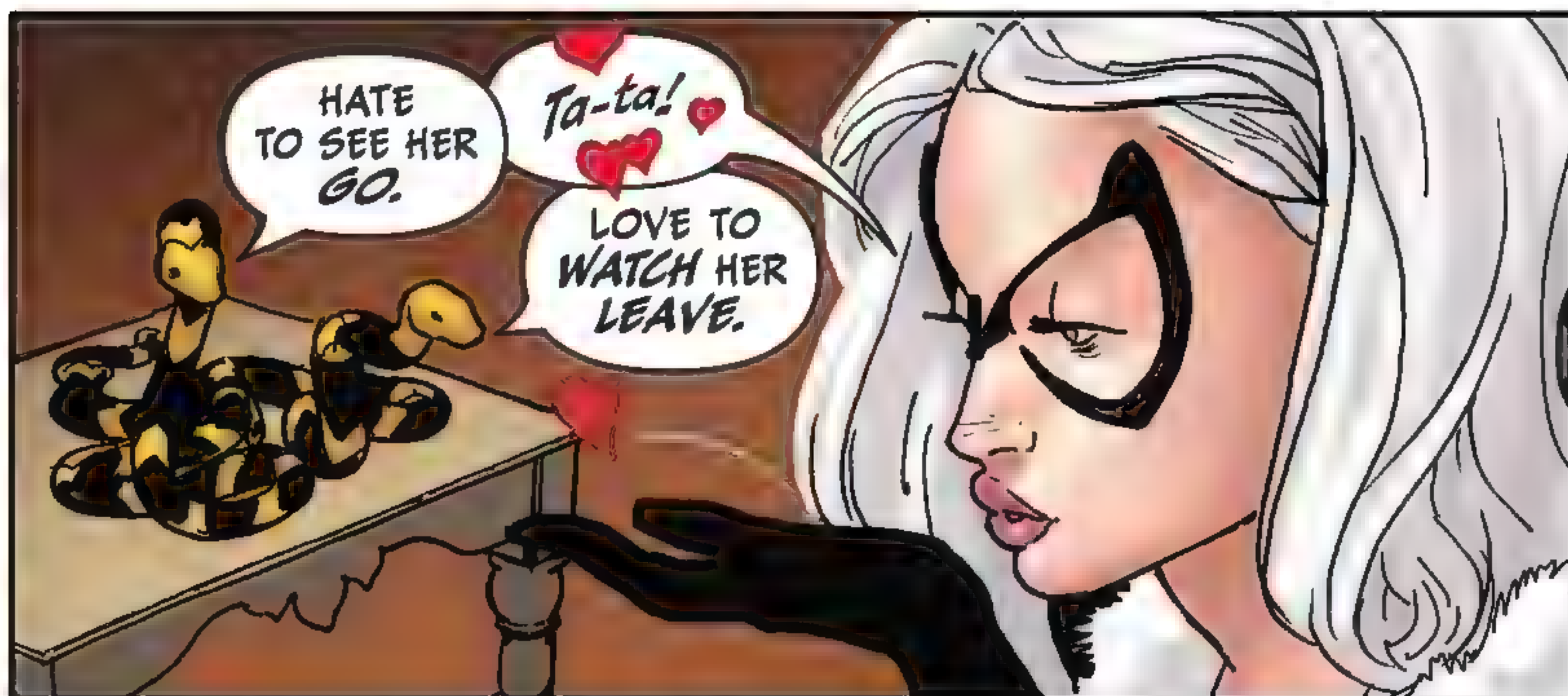
DROP
THE ZEROES,
GET WITH THE
HEROES!

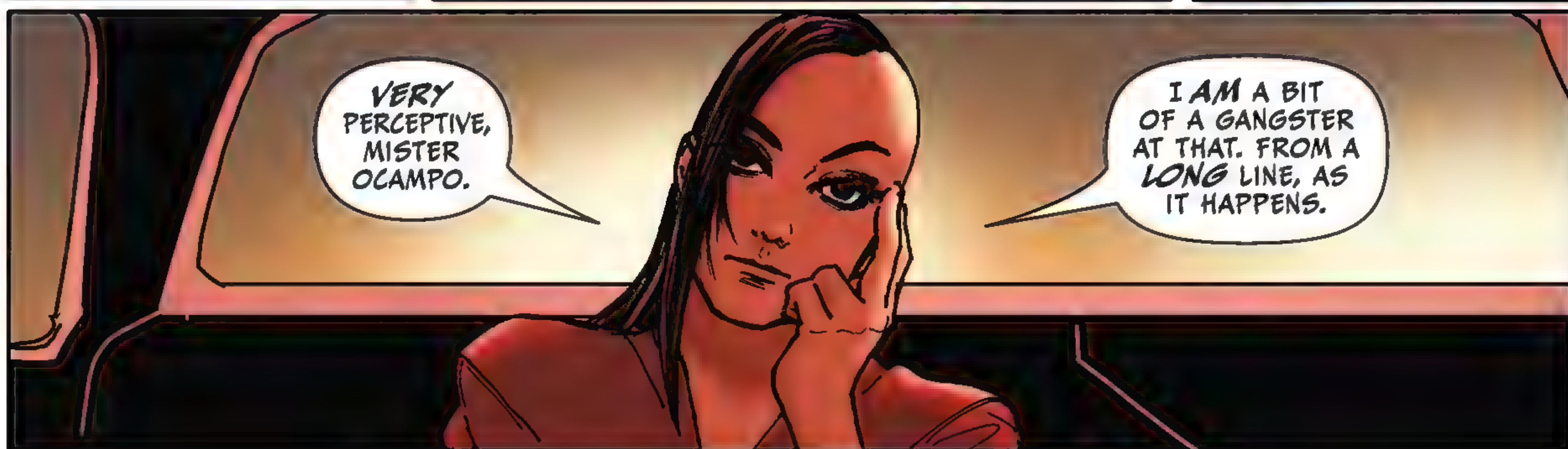
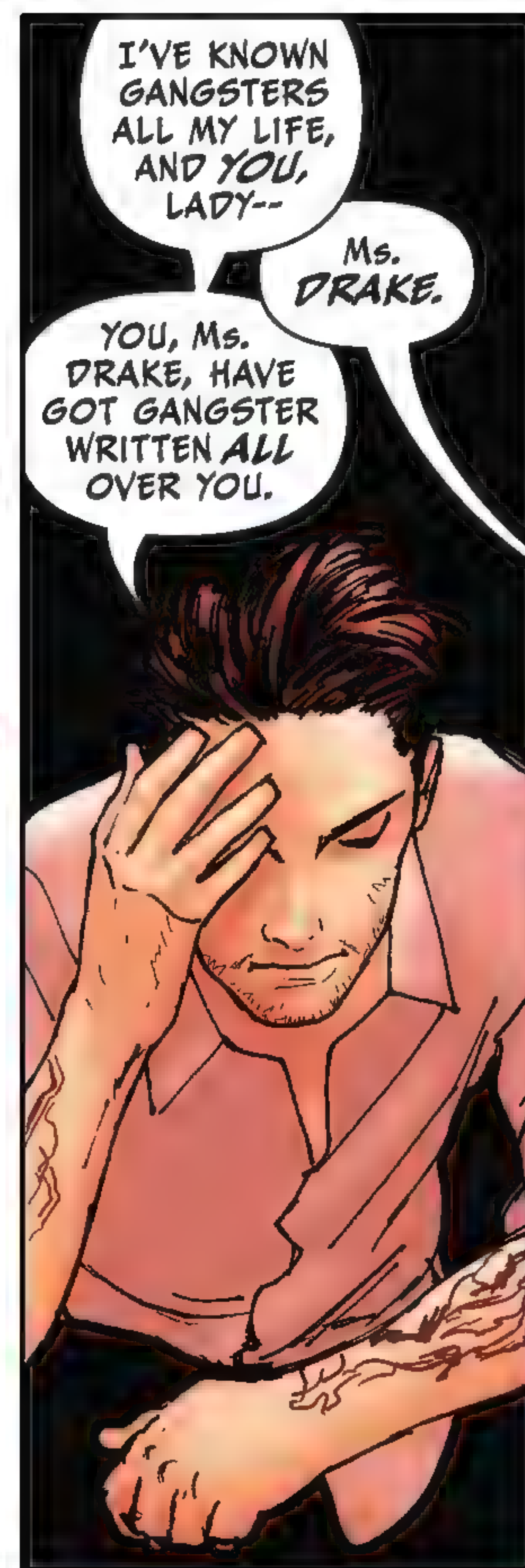
DON'T TRY
TO CATCALL
THIS KITTY,
BOYS.

MEE-YOWZA!

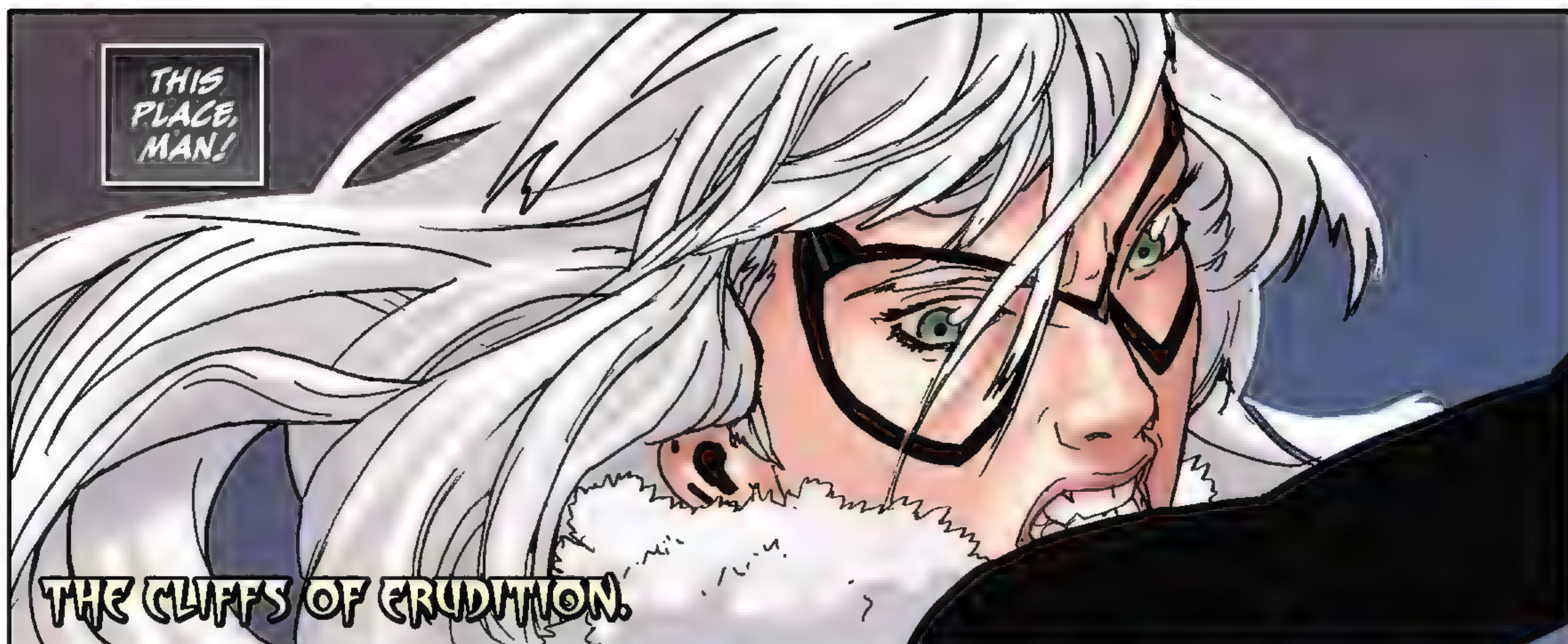


BE NICE.
MAKE ME FORGET
WHAT A LOVELY BELT
I COULD MAKE OUT
OF YOU TWO.











THE STAIRS.

THIS...
ugh...
PLACE.

MAN.
MAN.

BRIGHT
SIDE, BOYS?

WE'RE
DEFINITELY
GETTING OUR
10,000 STEPS
IN TODAY.

WE'RE
CLOSE. VERY
CLOSE.

ARE
YOU SURE
WE'RE NOT
JUST WALKING
AROUND IN
CIRCLES?

Oh YES.
I SMELL STRANGE'S
MAGIC. HEAR IT LIKE
A SONG. I FOLLOW IT
LIKE A MAP.

I WAS
CREATED
TO GRIND HIM
UNDER MY
BOOT.

UNTIL HE TOOK
MY STAR-STONE...
AND WITH IT, MY
CONNECTION TO THE
CREATORS AND THE
QUADRIVERSE...

YOU WANT THE...
MORAL FLEXIBILITY
TO GET THE JOB DONE...

...BUT YOU
DON'T WANT THE
DREAD DORMAMMU'S
BEST FRIEND.
OR THE NEXT THING
YOU KNOW YOU'RE
TRUSSED UP
ON AN ALTAR.

STAY SHARP.
I DON'T WANT TO
RUN INTO WHATEVER
WEIRDOS ARE
LURKING AROUND
HERE.

I MEAN, KINKY,
BUT NOT GREAT
IF YOU'VE STARTED
A LONG BOOK.

DON'T THINK
THAT I HAVEN'T
NOTICED THAT OUR
PAL XANDER IS
GETTING MORE...
COHERENT.

AAAGHH!

--THEY'RE NOT
GOOD FILMS!
HOW CAN YOU SAY
THEY'RE GOOD
FILMS?

THEY'RE
ELVIS MOVIES.
THERE'S GOOD
MOVIES, THERE'S
BAD MOVIES AND
THERE'S ELVIS
MOVIES.

YEAH,
COME ON, DOC,
I THOUGHT YOU
WERE SUPPOSED
TO BE A SMART
GUY?

YOU WANT TO HIRE A
SUPER-POWER TYPE,
THAT'S ONE THING.
MOST OF THOSE GUYS
WERE BLUE-COLLAR GUYS,
LOW-LEVEL CRIMS, MAYBE
LAB ASSISTANTS OR
CRACKPOT INVENTORS.

YOU
HEAR THAT?
A SCREAM.

A SCREAM
OF PURE
AGONY.

A SOUL
TORTURED
BEYOND ITS
LIMITS.

THOSE
GUYS ARE IN IT
FOR THE CASH.
THEY'RE EASY
TO UNDERSTAND.

BUT MERLINS...
THEY'RE
DIFFERENT.
MAGIC STUFF
IS DIFFERENT.

YOU DON'T WANT
ONE WITHOUT THE
JUICE YOU NEED TO
GET THE JOB DONE--
WHAT'S THE POINT?

BUT TOO MUCH JUICE, AND YOU'RE
WALKING INTO A JOB WITH THE
EQUIVALENT OF BRIEFCASE NUKE
WITH A DEEPLY IRRATIONAL TRIGGER.

THING ABOUT
HIRING A MERLIN
IS THAT IT'S A
BALANCING ACT.
TRICKY BUSINESS.

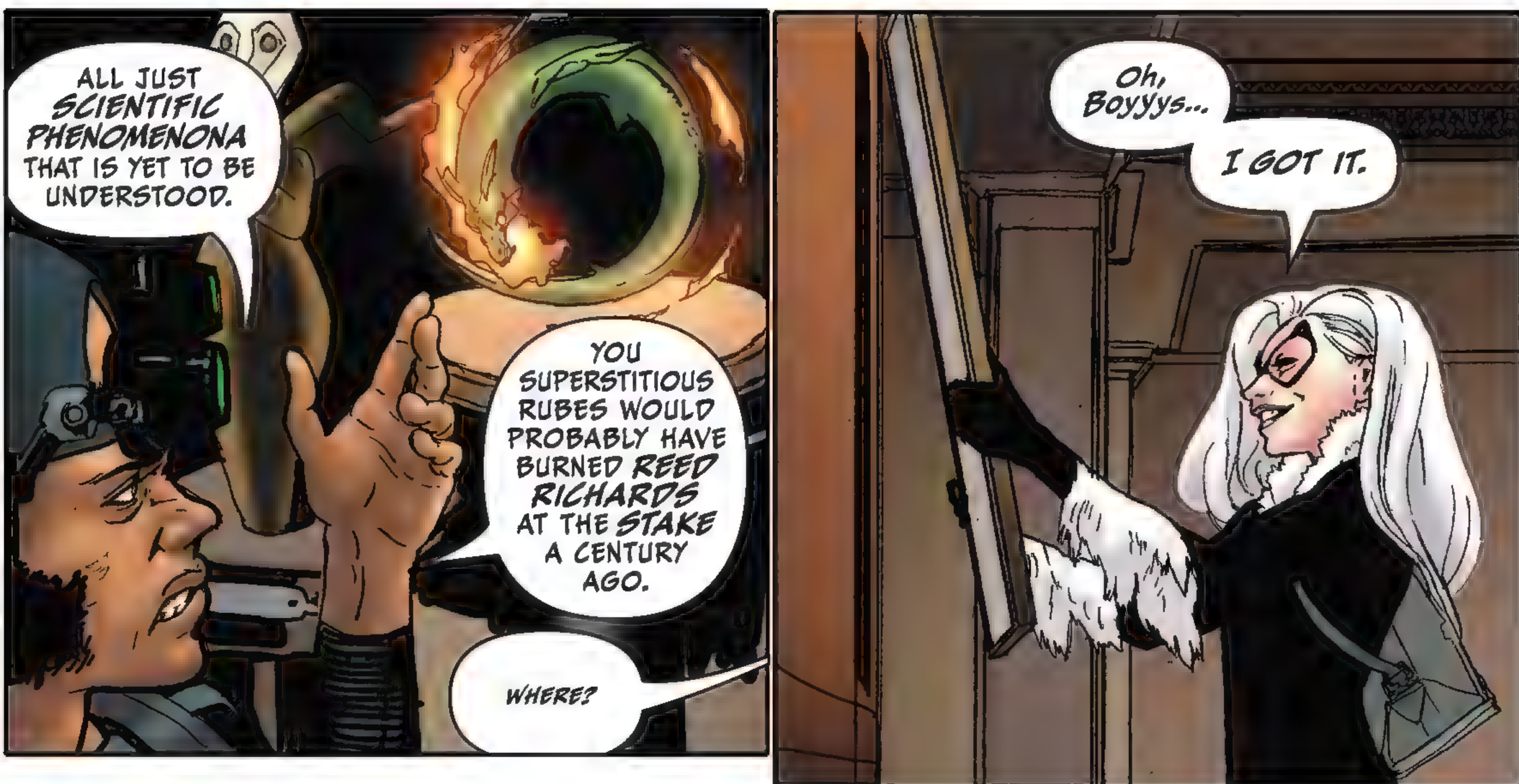
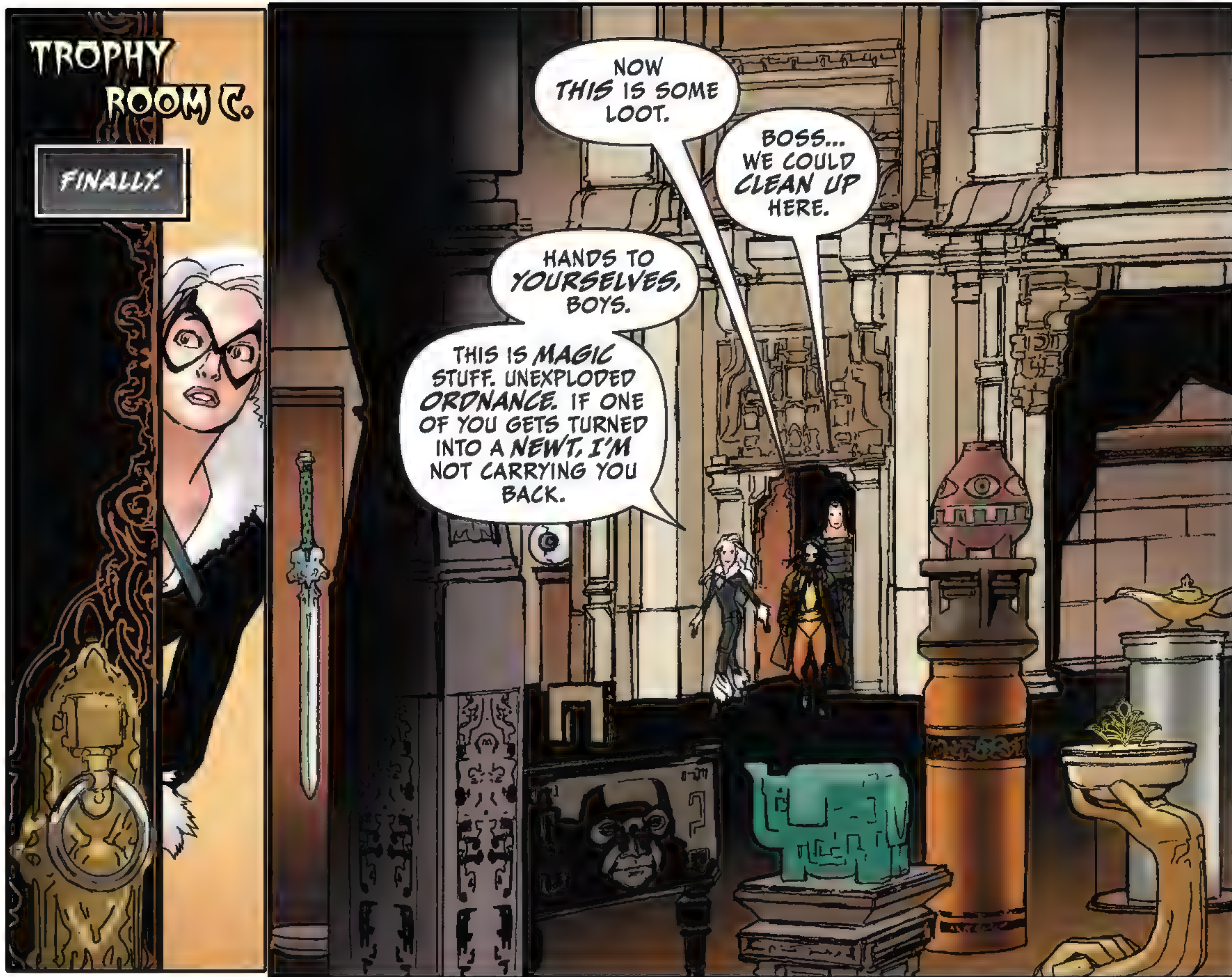
WHAT'S
UP, DOC?

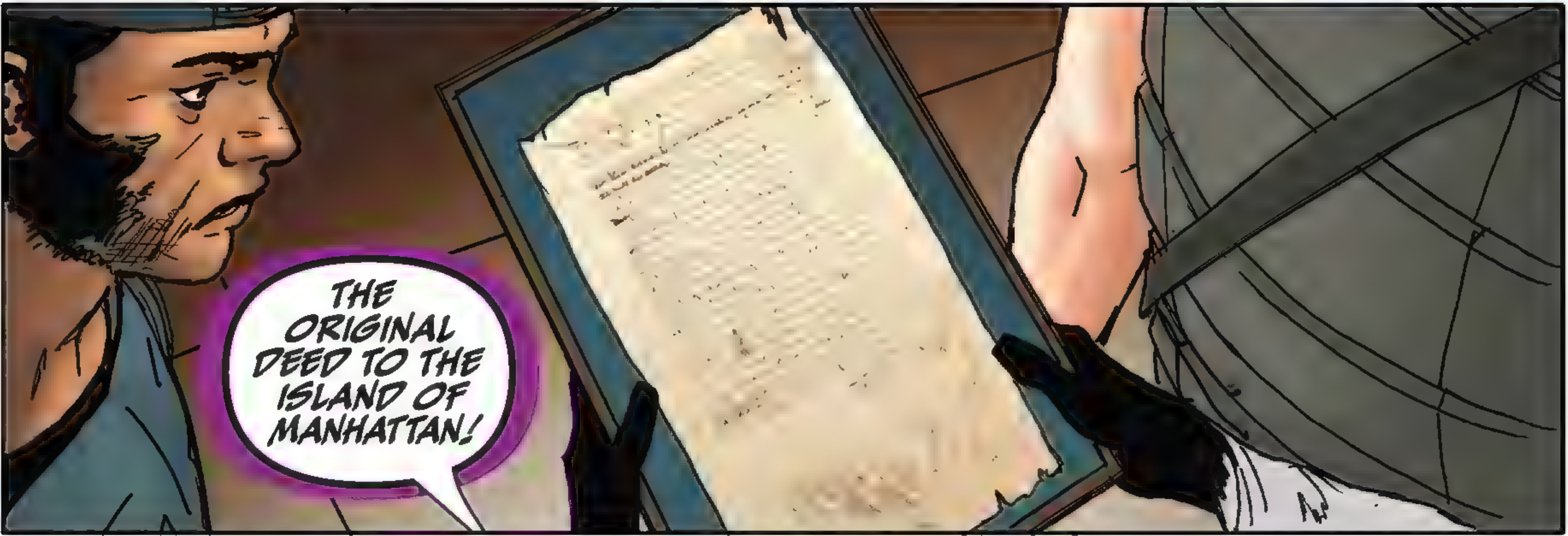
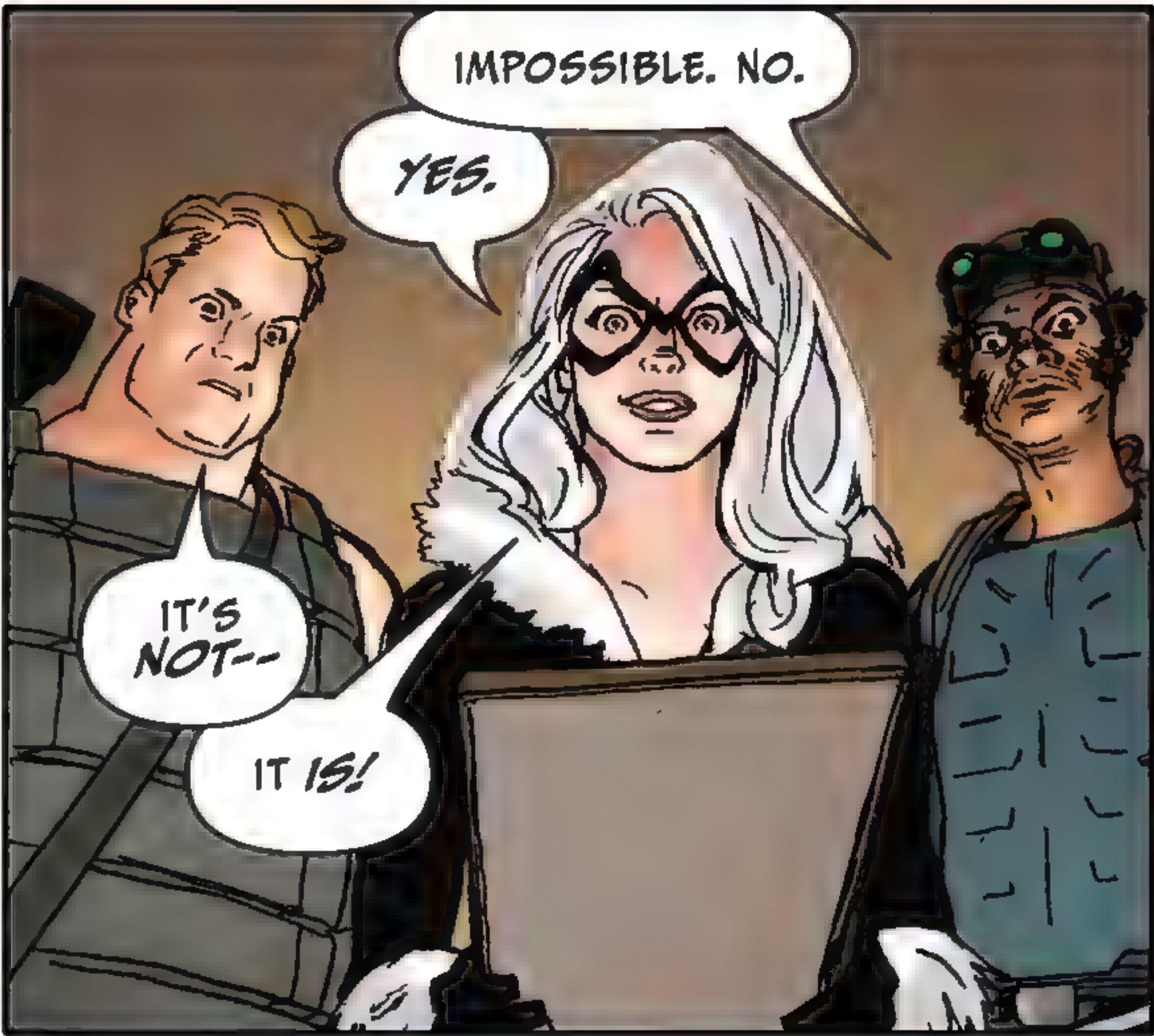
SCANNING
FOR WI-FI
SIGNALS.

THERE ARE
DOZENS, AND
THE NAMES...

WHAT'S A
"SHUMA-
GORATH"?

DON'T
CONNECT TO
THAT.





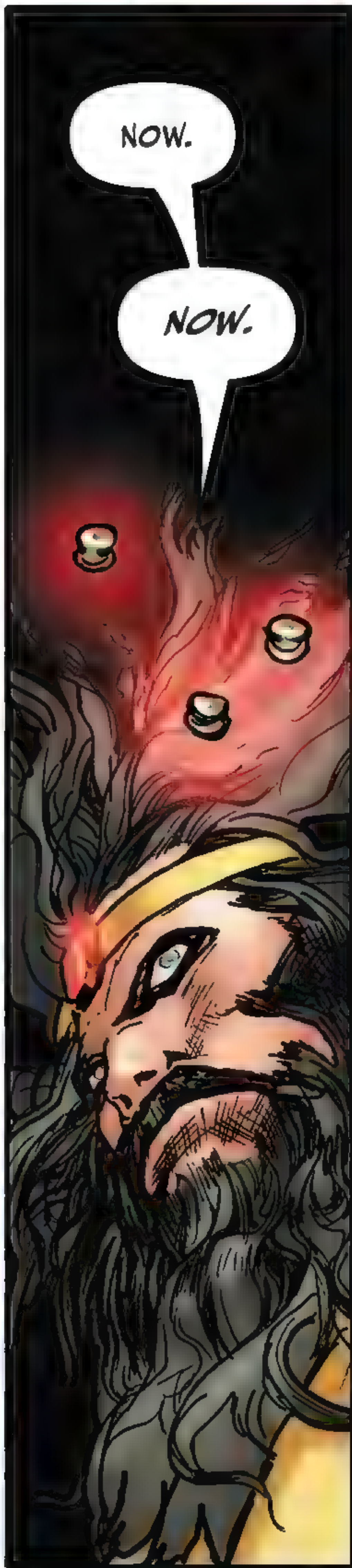


THINGS BEGIN
TO GO REAL
WRONG.



THINGS
BEGIN
TO GET
WEIRD.

BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!



NOW.

NOW.



NOW!

MASTER
OF THE SIXTEEN
SORCERIES OF
THE CREATORS!
LORD OF THE
STAR-STONE!

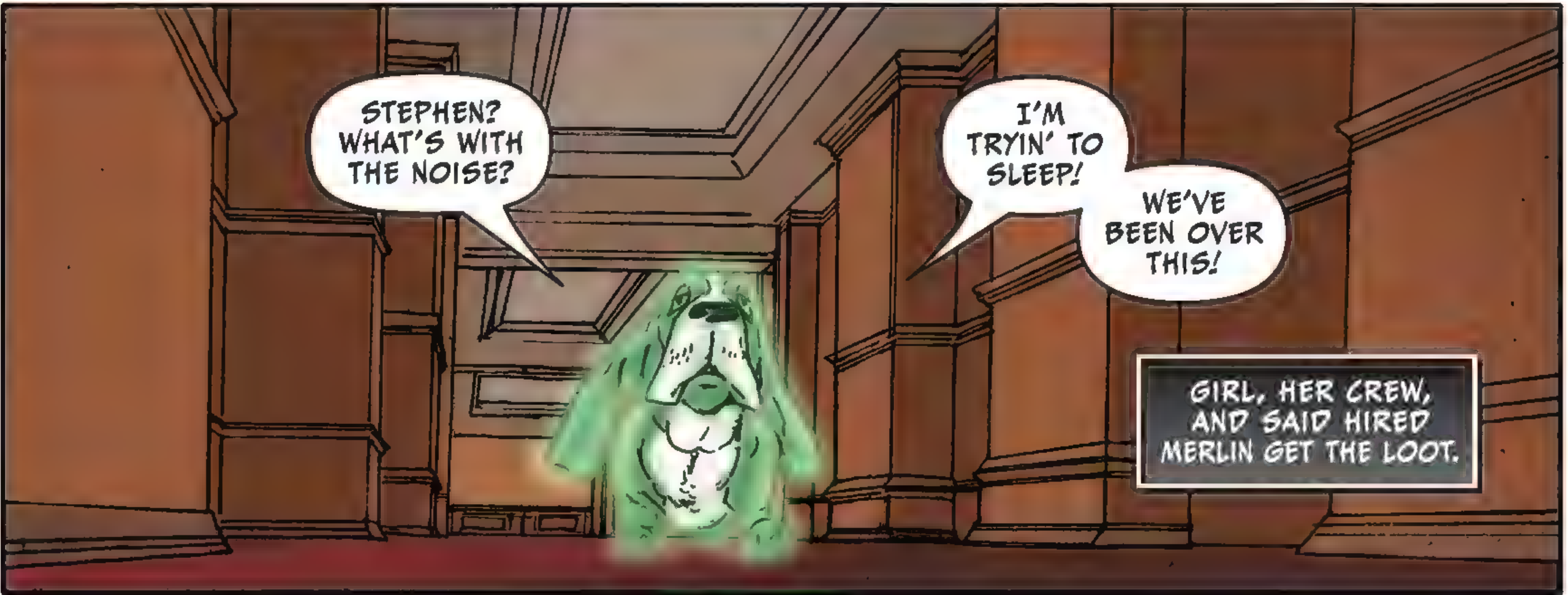
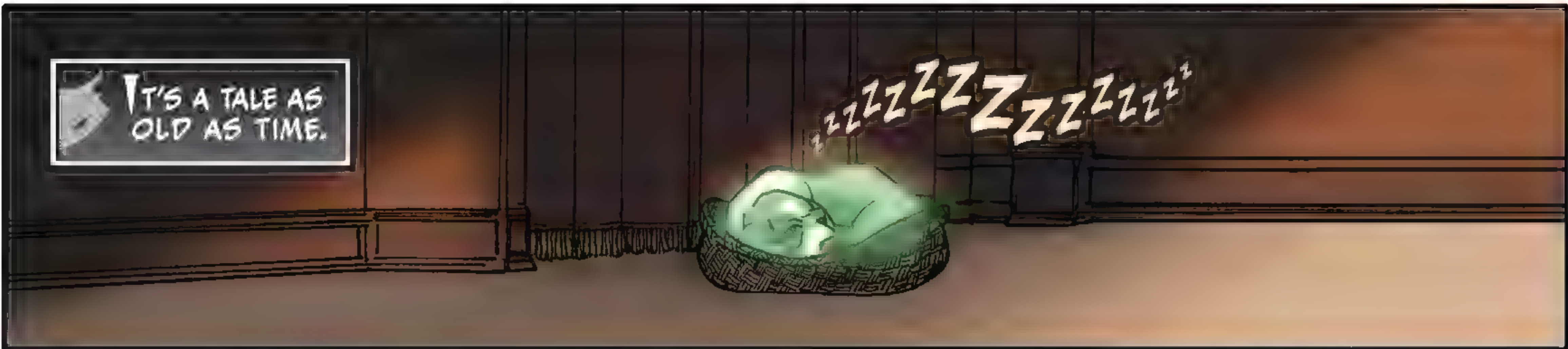
XANDER
the
MERCILESS!



NOW
I FEEL
MORE LIKE
MYSELF!

THIS
PLACE,
MAN.







MERLIN FLIES
OFF THE
HANDLE...

THIS AIN'T
THE TIME TO
MOVE...



TASTE
SARNIOS'
STORM OF
SWORDS,
POLTROONS!

LET'S
TALK ABOUT
THIS-- **YAIIEE!**

...AND GOES
FULL THULSA
DOOM ON GIRL
AND HER CREW.

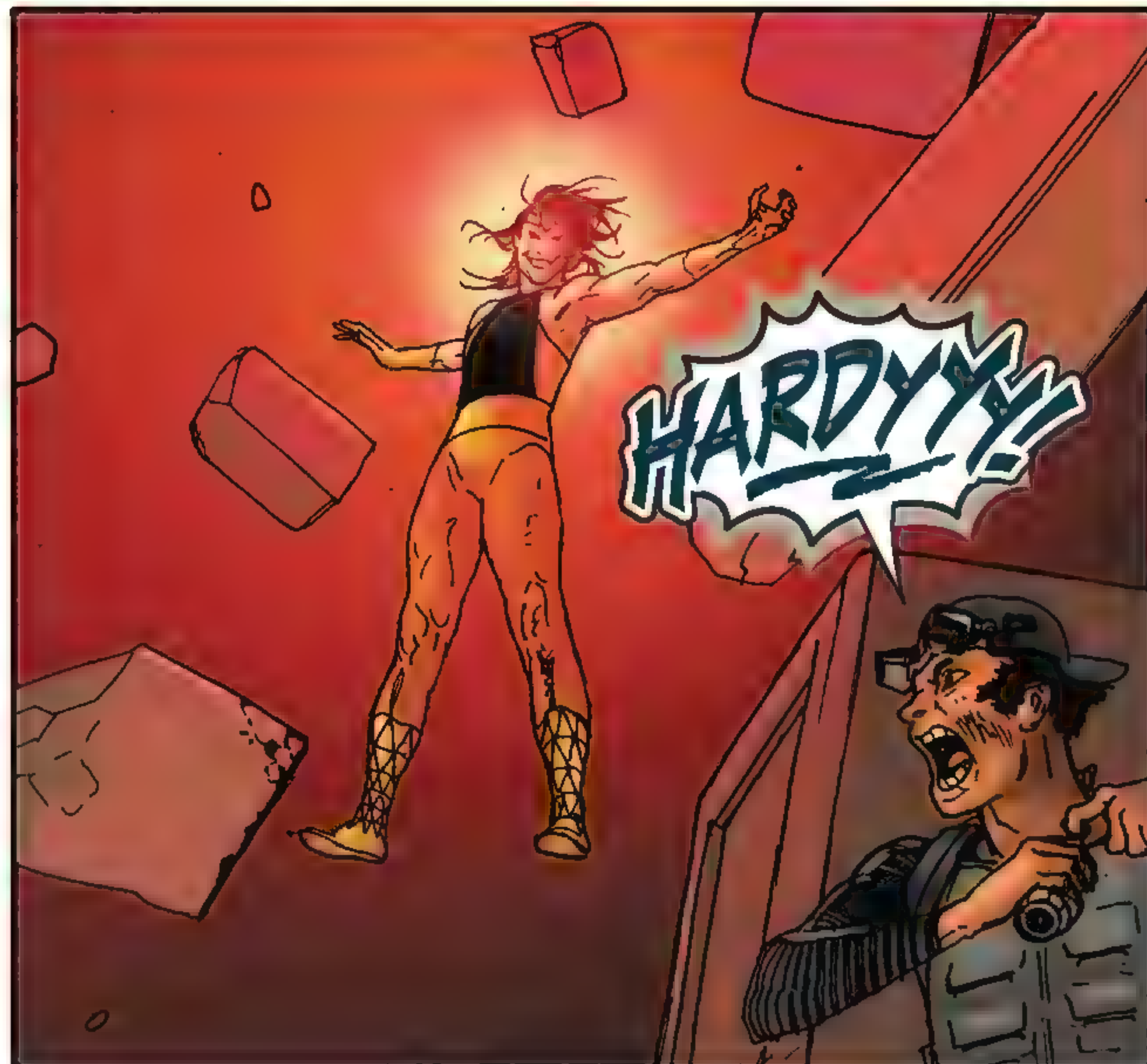
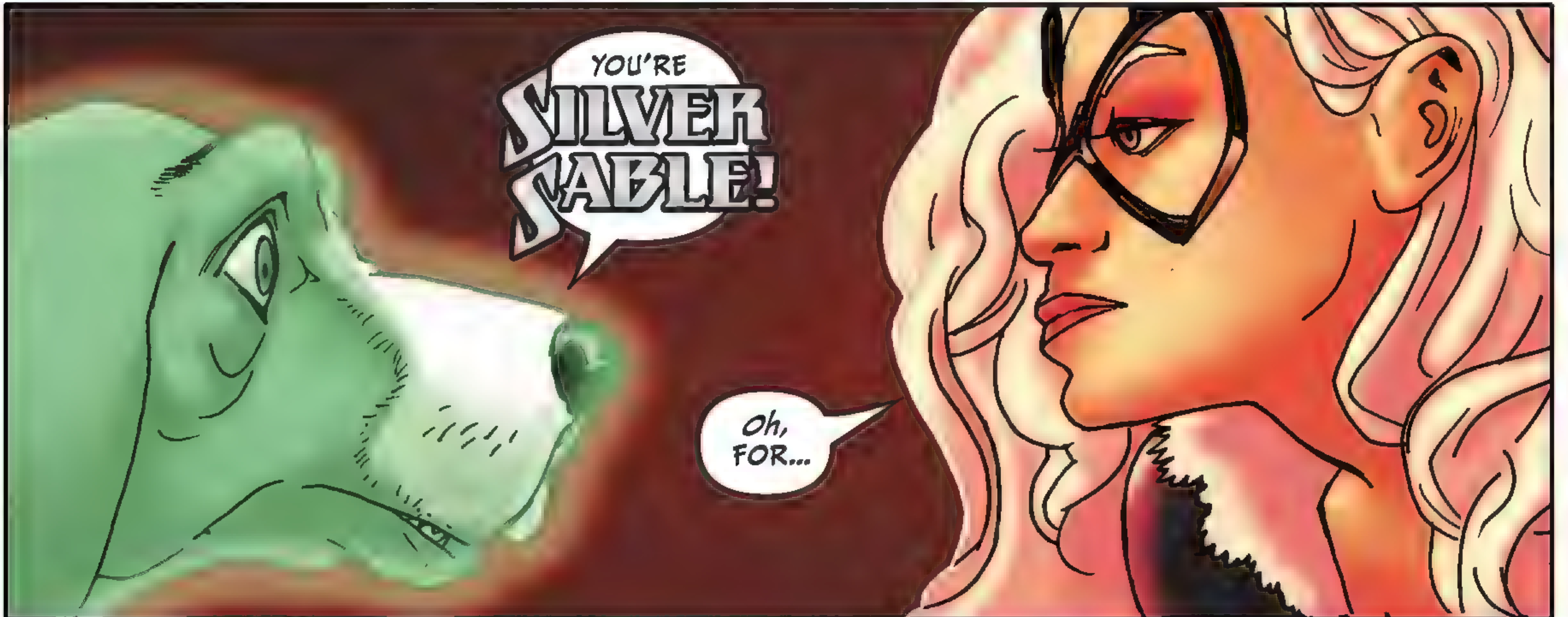
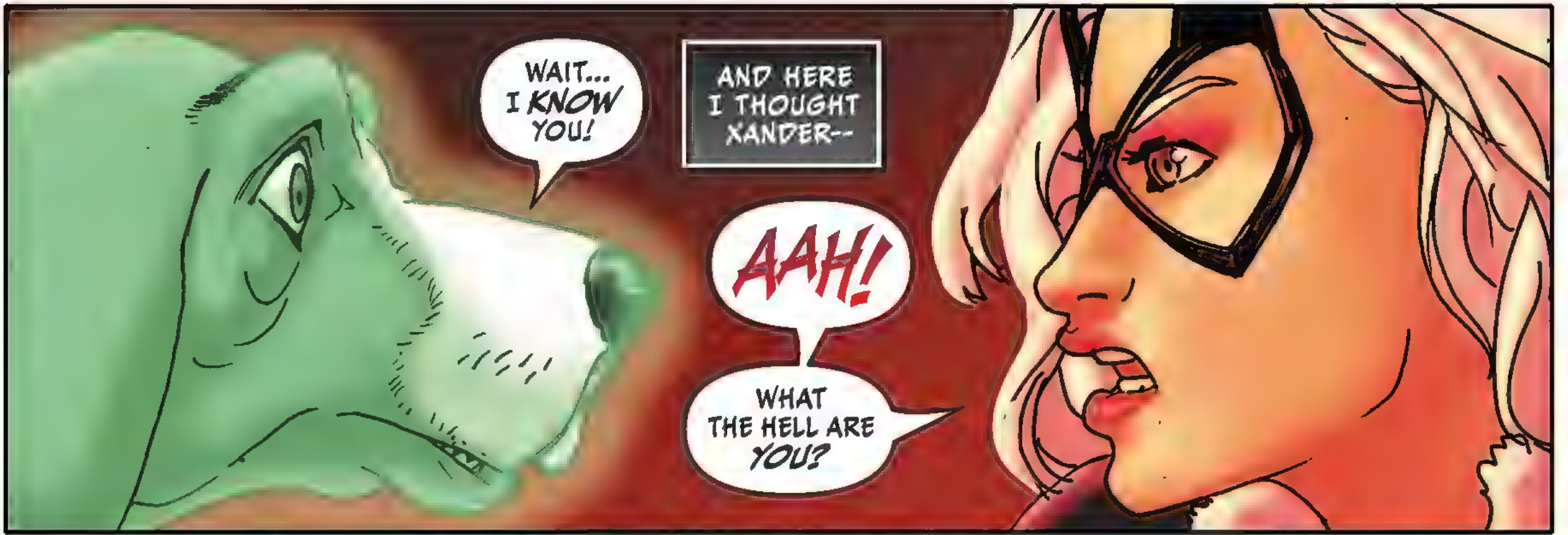
...FURNITURE...



AHHH!

I AM STRONGLY
CONSIDERING A
MORE RIGOROUS
HIRING PROCESS.

WHUMP!





OKAY, PAL!

FUN'S FUN!

BUT NOW WE GOT TO EAT YOU UP!

SNAKEY-SNACKY TIME!

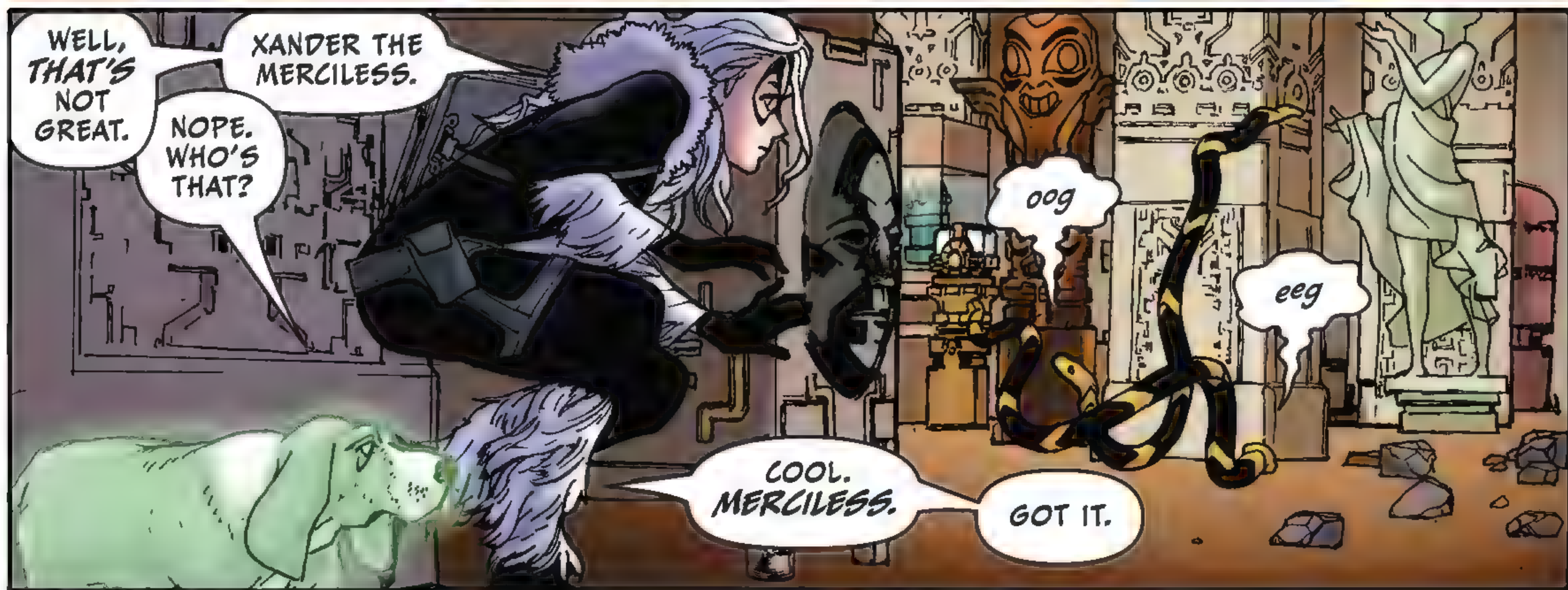


Heh.
PLEASE.



CRAWL AWAY, LITTLE GUARDIANS. I'M NOT DONE PLAYING WITH MY OTHER TOYS YET.

AAAAHHHHH!



WELL, THAT'S NOT GREAT.

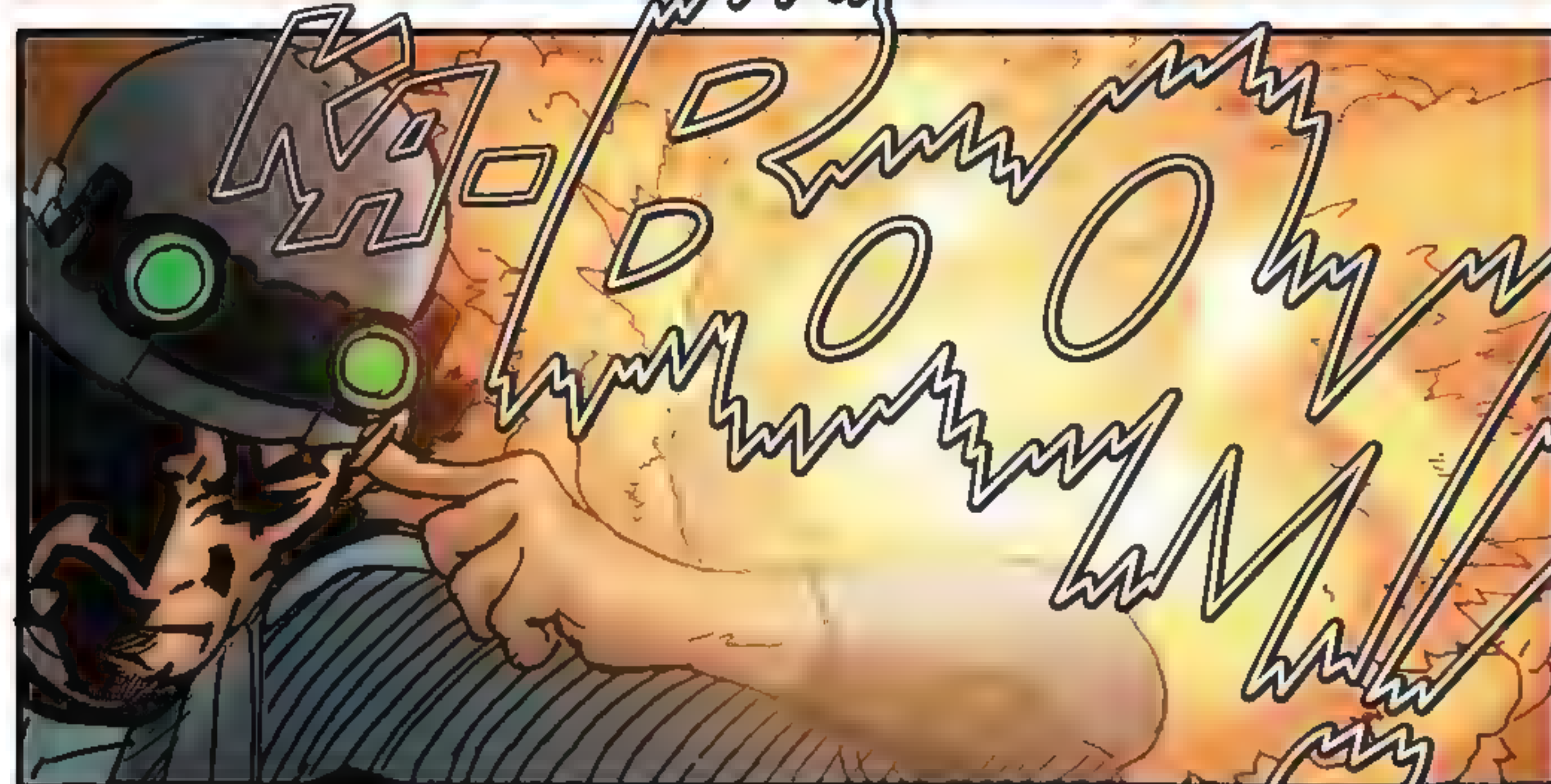
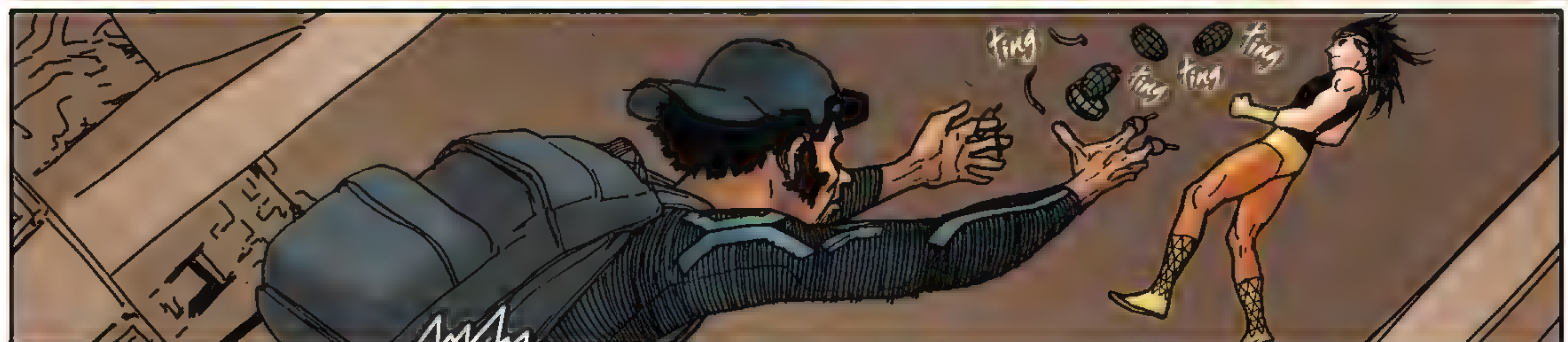
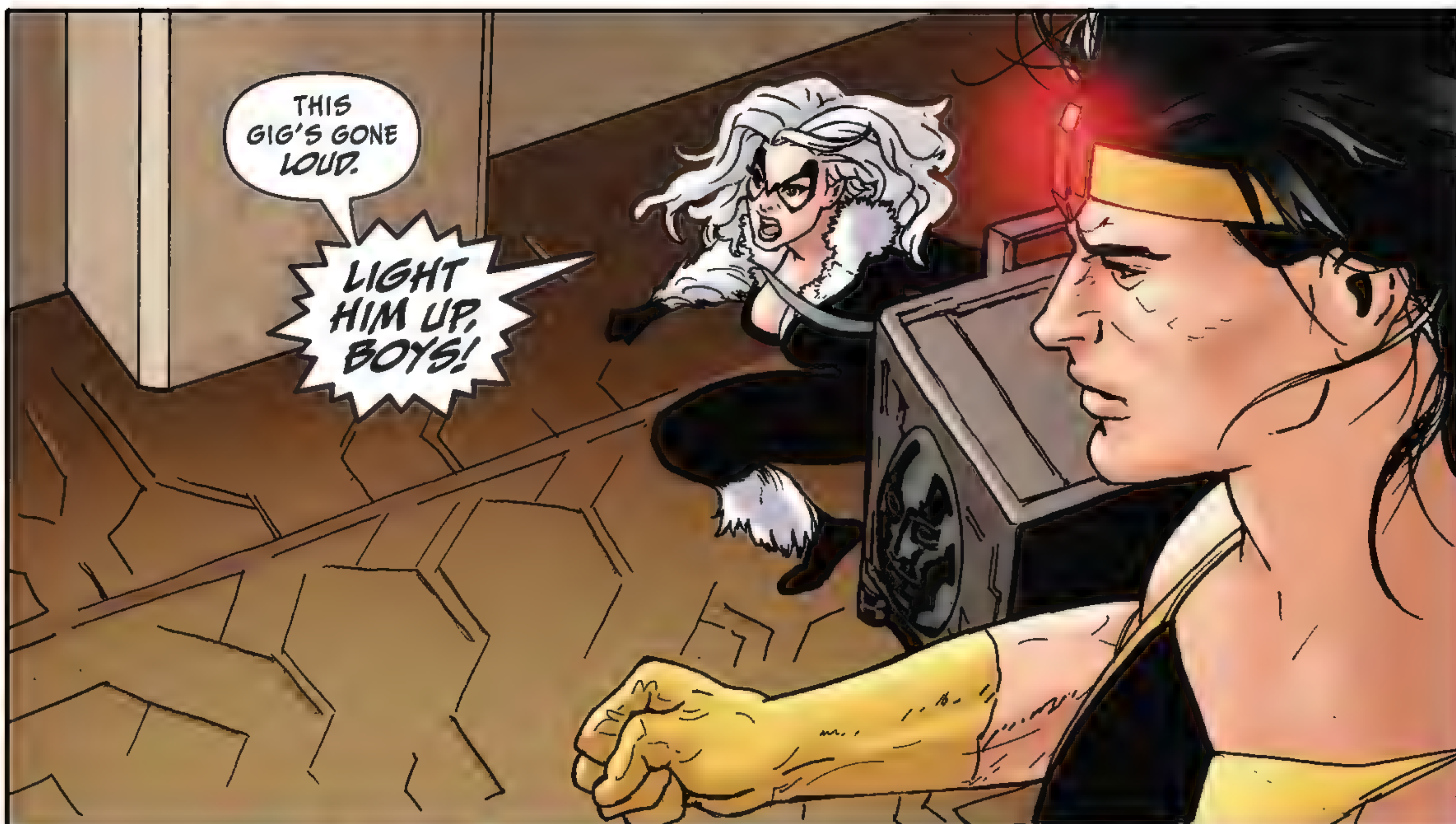
XANDER THE MERCILESS.
NOPE. WHO'S THAT?

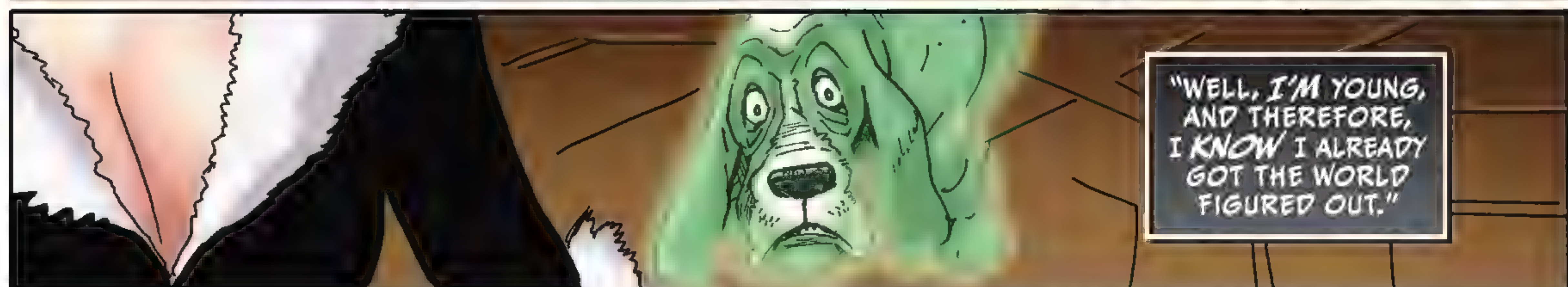
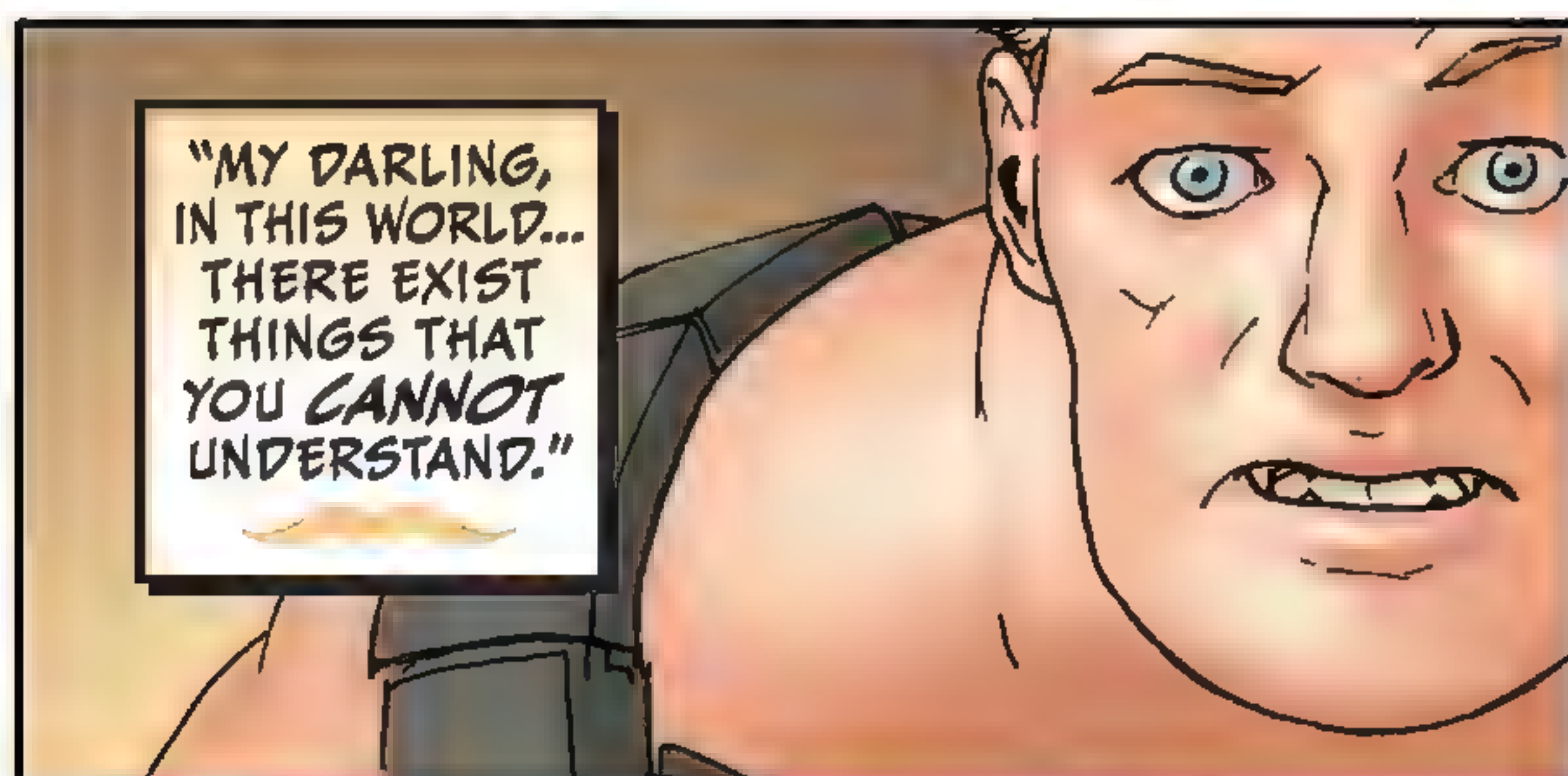
COOL. MERCILESS.

GOT IT.

oog

eeg







THEN.

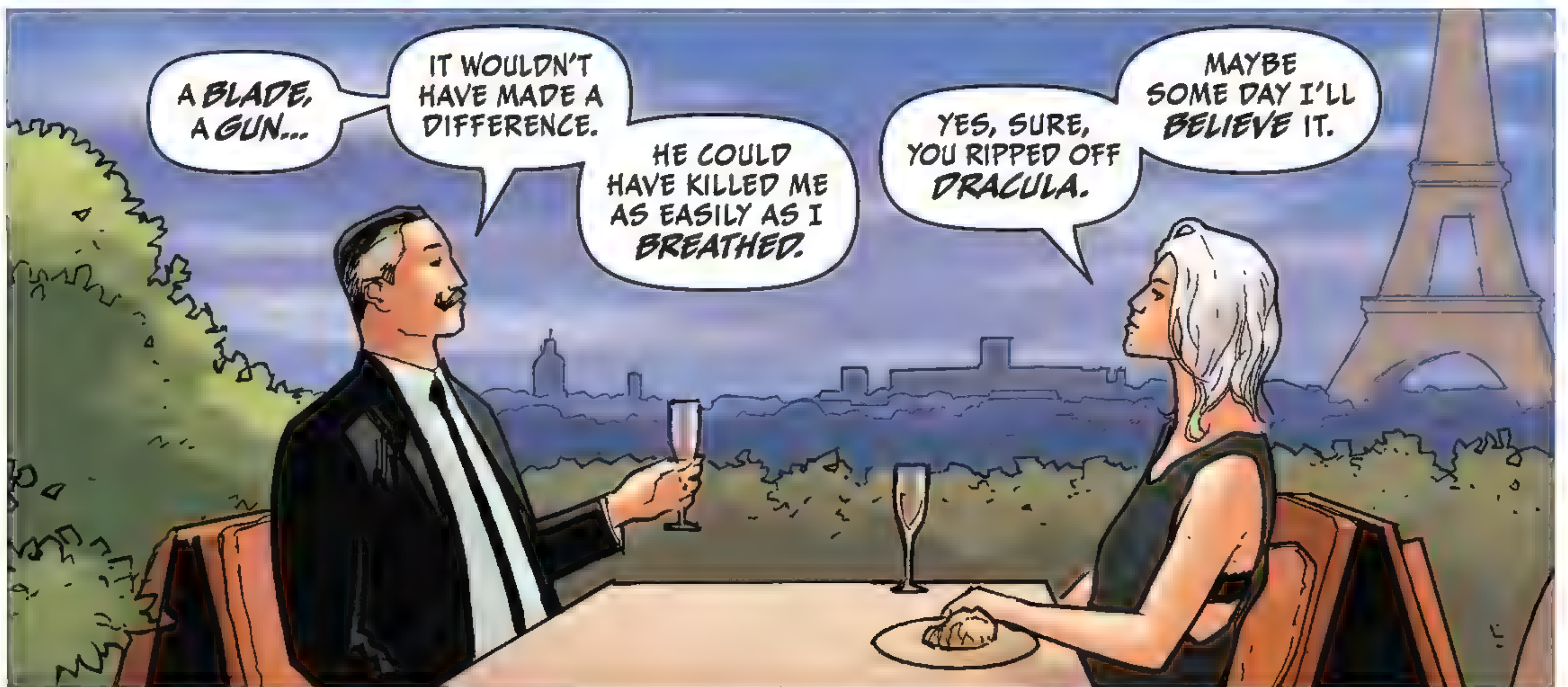
OF
COURSE
YOU DO.

YOU ARE,
AS YOU SAID,
YOUNG.

BUT I AM
NOT.



"AND I HAVE
LOOKED THE
UNNATURAL
IN THE EYE."



A BLADE,
A GUN...

IT WOULDN'T
HAVE MADE A
DIFFERENCE.

HE COULD
HAVE KILLED ME
AS EASILY AS I
BREATHED.

YES, SURE,
YOU RIPPED OFF
DRACULA.

MAYBE
SOME DAY I'LL
BELIEVE IT.



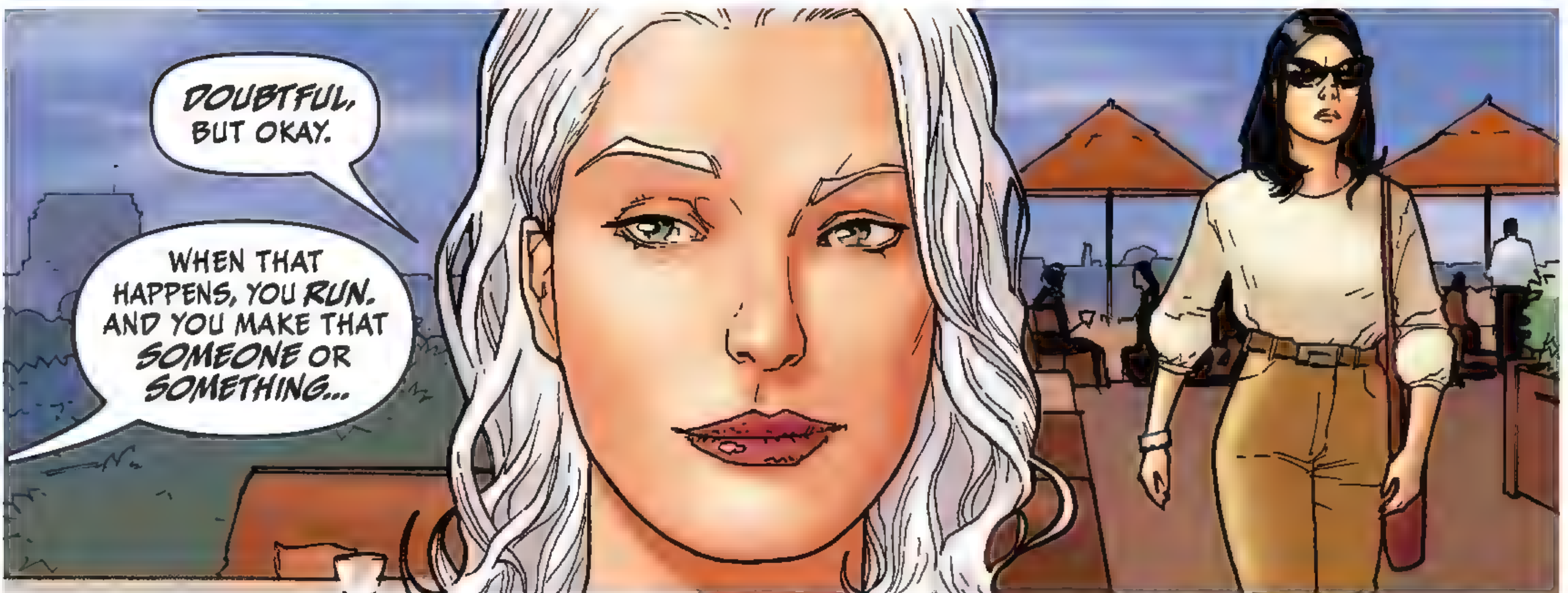
YOU, MY
DARLING, ARE
AN INSouciant
BRAT. JUST
LIKE YOUR
FATHER.

REMIND ME
WHY EXACTLY
I SPEND SO
MANY YEARS OF MY
LIFE TRAINING THE
INGRATES OF THE
HARDY FAMILY TO
BE THIEVES?



BECAUSE
"THOSE WHO
CAN'T"...?

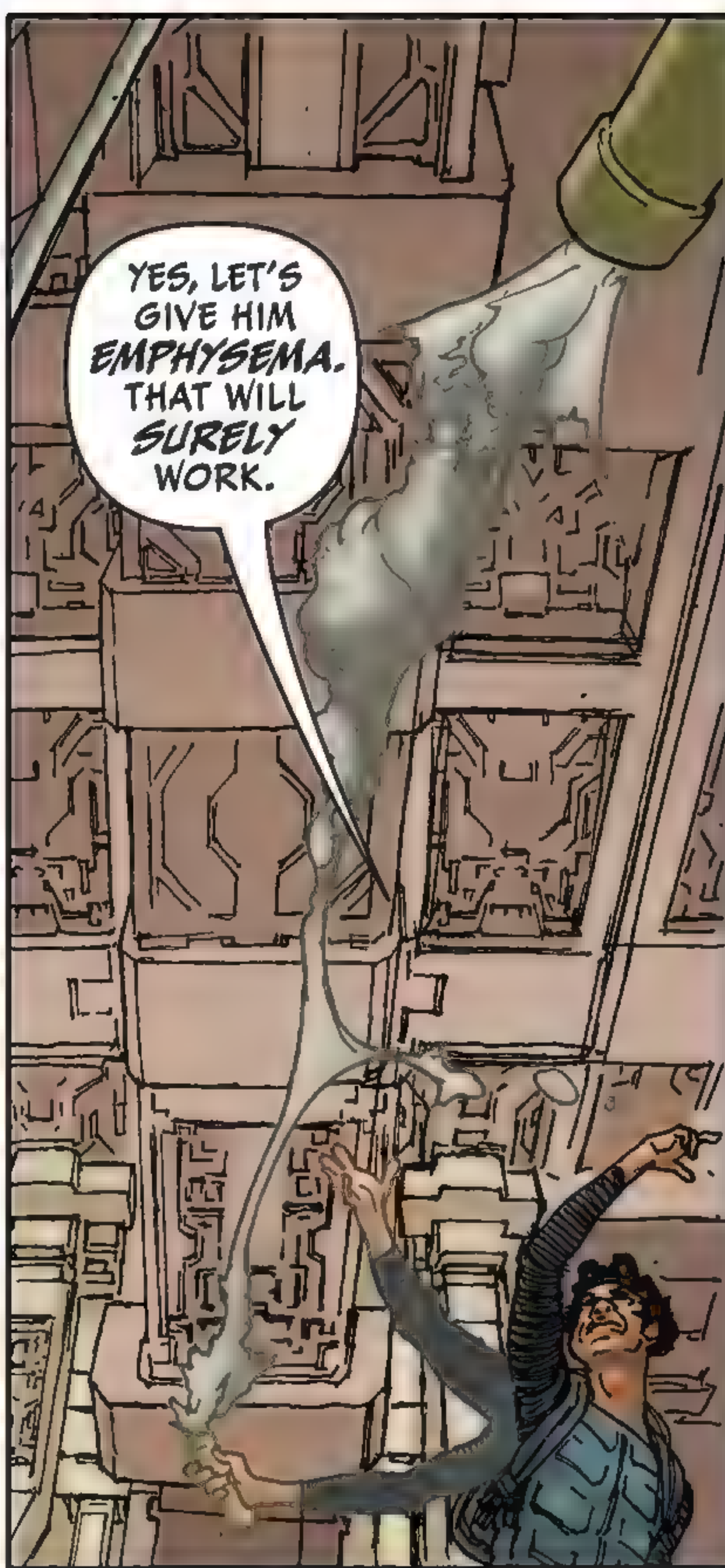
BITE YOUR
TONGUE.



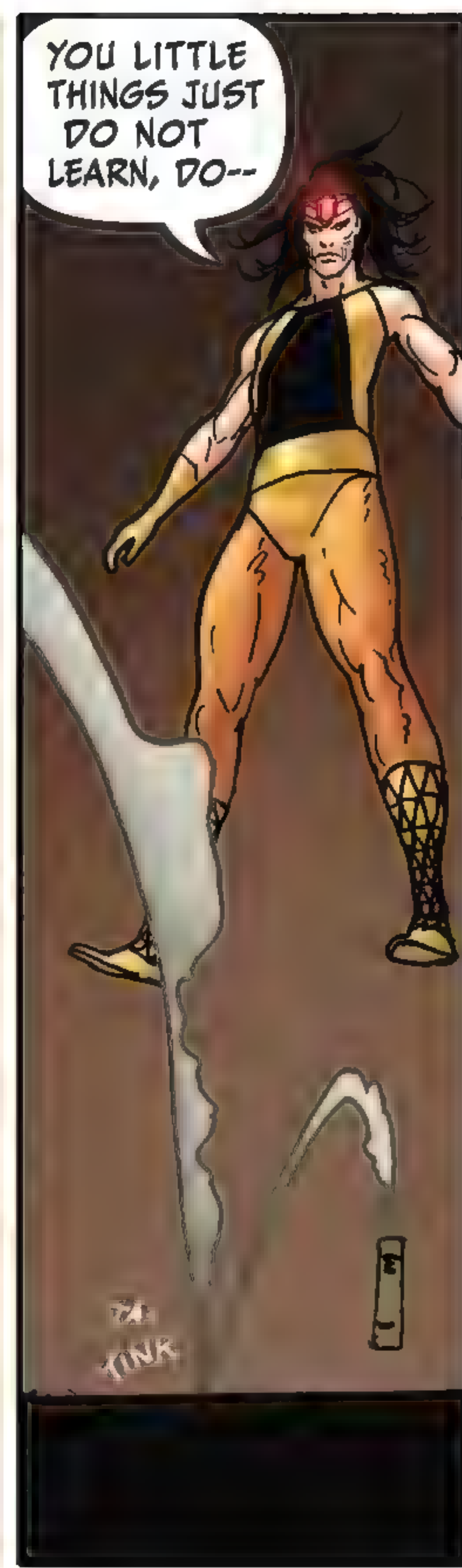


DOC!

SMOKE,
THEN
AMSCRAY!



YES, LET'S
GIVE HIM
EMPHYSEMA.
THAT WILL
SURELY
WORK.



YOU LITTLE
THINGS JUST
DO NOT
LEARN, DO--



POSHH!

PLAN,
BOSS?

I GOT
A PLAN.

AND WHAT,
EXACTLY, IS
THIS PLAN?

WE'RE GOING
TO MAKE HIM
SOMEONE OR
SOMETHING
ELSE'S
PROBLEM.

AND
LET'S NOT
BE FORMAL--
CALL ME
SILVER.





ON YOU, FOOLISH GIRL, I WILL PRACTICE. HONE MY SKILLS.

I WILL SHOW YOU NEW VISTAS OF TERROR AND PAIN...



NO!

GET AWAY, DREAM-THINGS!

AAAAGH!!



MMMPHHH--*



NO WAY FOR A MAN TO DIE.

WHAT DO YOU SAY, DOC? YOU BELIEVE IN MAGIC STUFF NOW?

ABSOLUTELY NOT.



WAIT, YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN MAGIC?!

THAT GUY DID ALL KINDS OF MAGIC. YOU SAW IT.

I DON'T EXPECT A *DOG* TO UNDERSTAND.



OKAY, CAN YOU MAP US A WAY OUT OF HERE?

YOU GOT IT, BOSS. U.S. ARMY EDUCATION.

RIGHT, I ALWAYS FORGET THAT YOU WERE IN THE ARMY.

LOOK, WHAT PEOPLE CALL "MAGIC"?

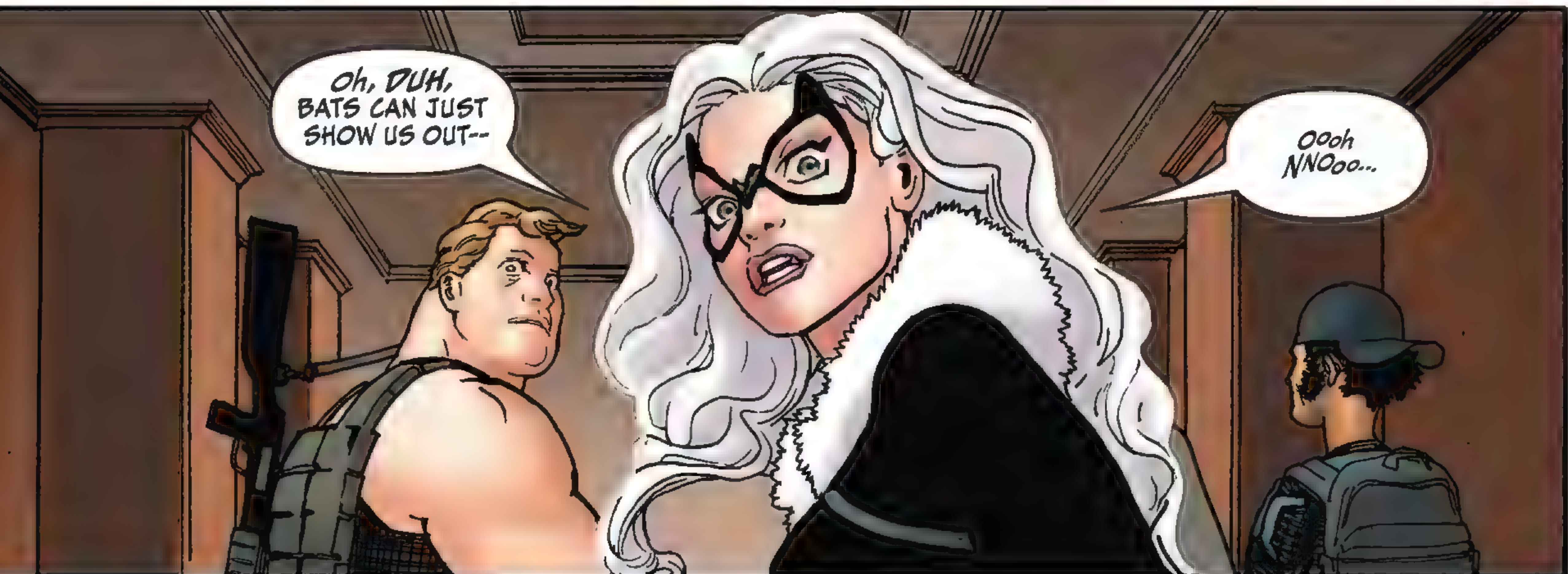
NOTHING BUT QUANTUM MANIPULATION OF LOCAL PROBABILITY FIELDS. MAKING THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE THROUGH APPLIED FORCE OF WILL.

NOTHING MORE MAGICAL THAN, SAY, MUTANT ABILITIES.



YOU KNOW YOU'RE TELLING THIS TO A TALKING GHOST DOG, RIGHT?

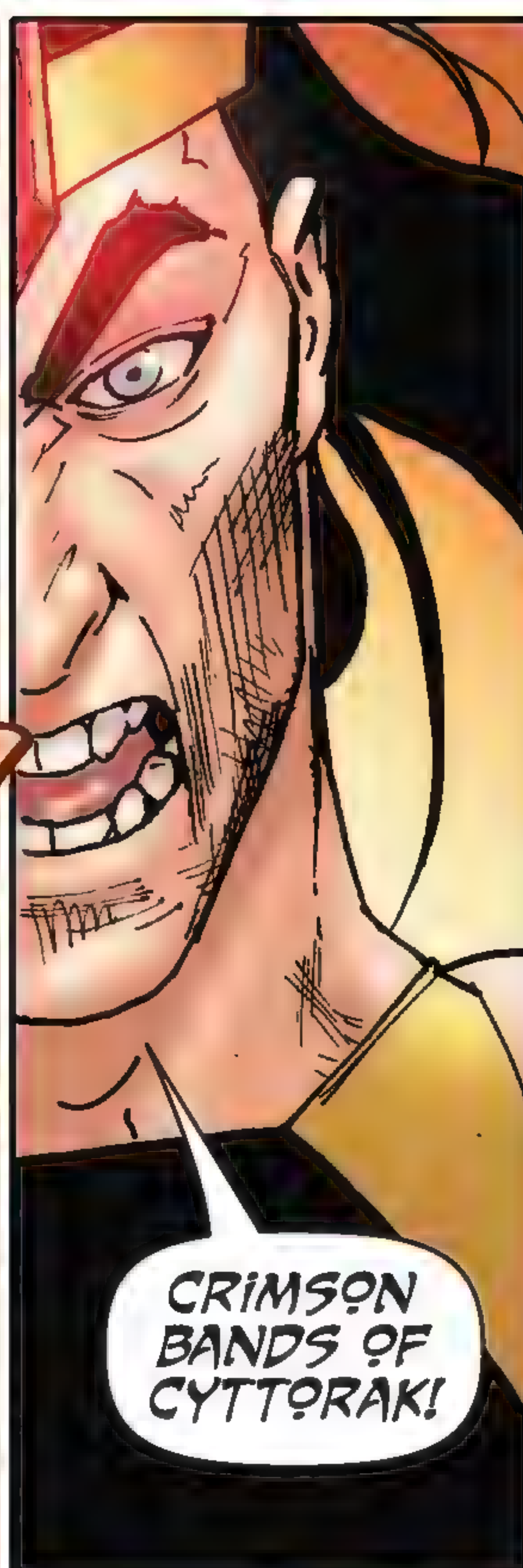
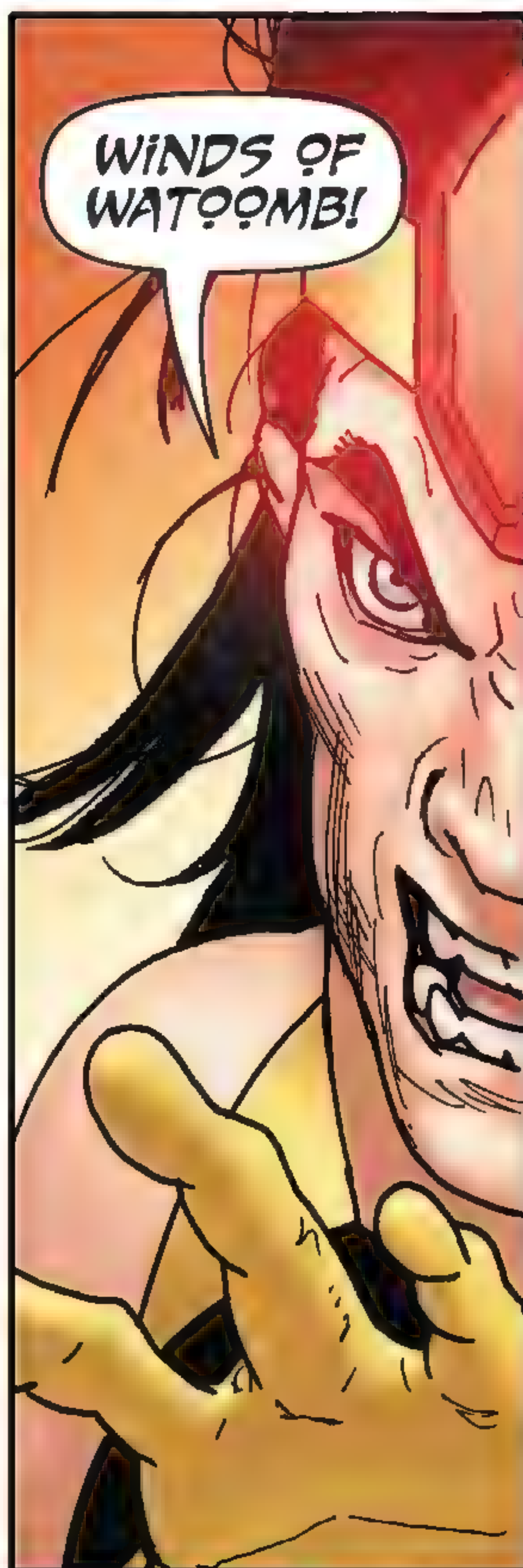
THAT'S LIKE, DOUBLE MAGIC.

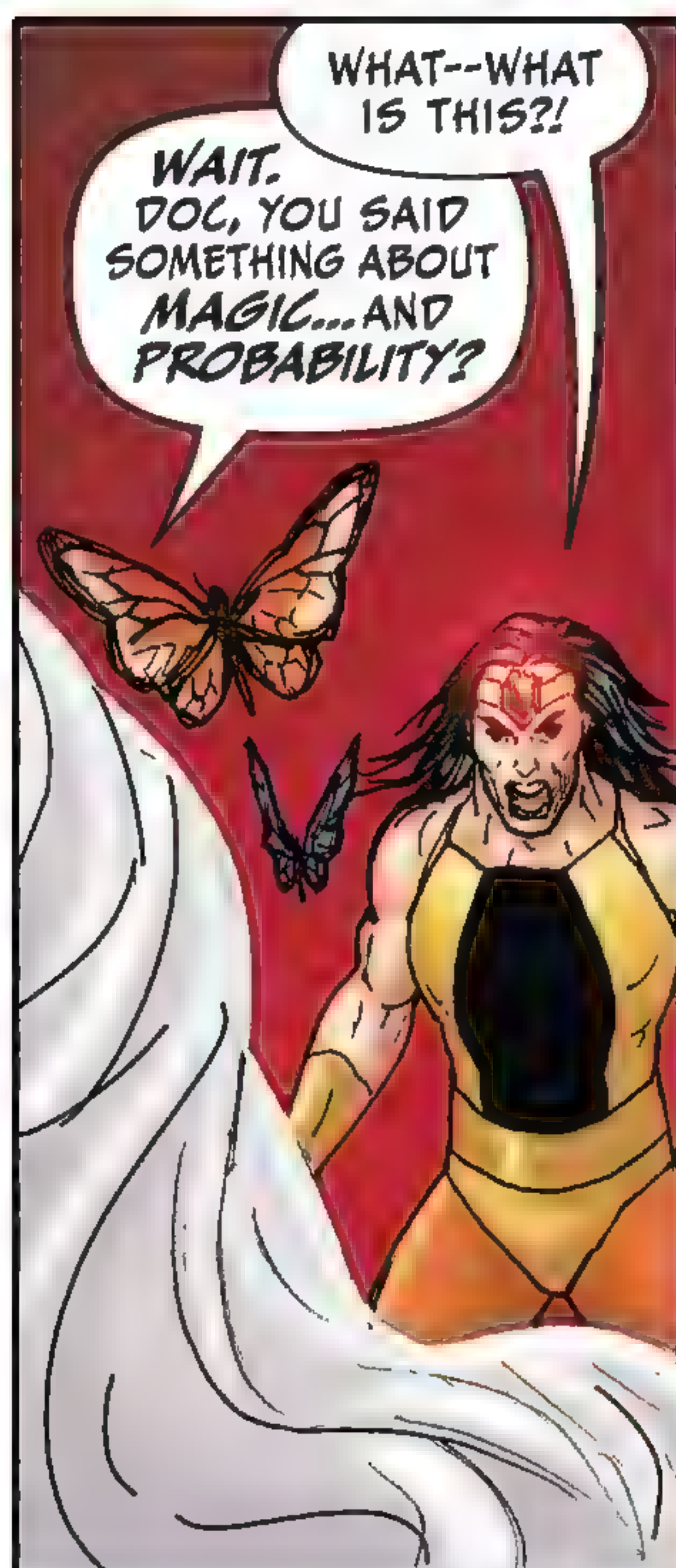
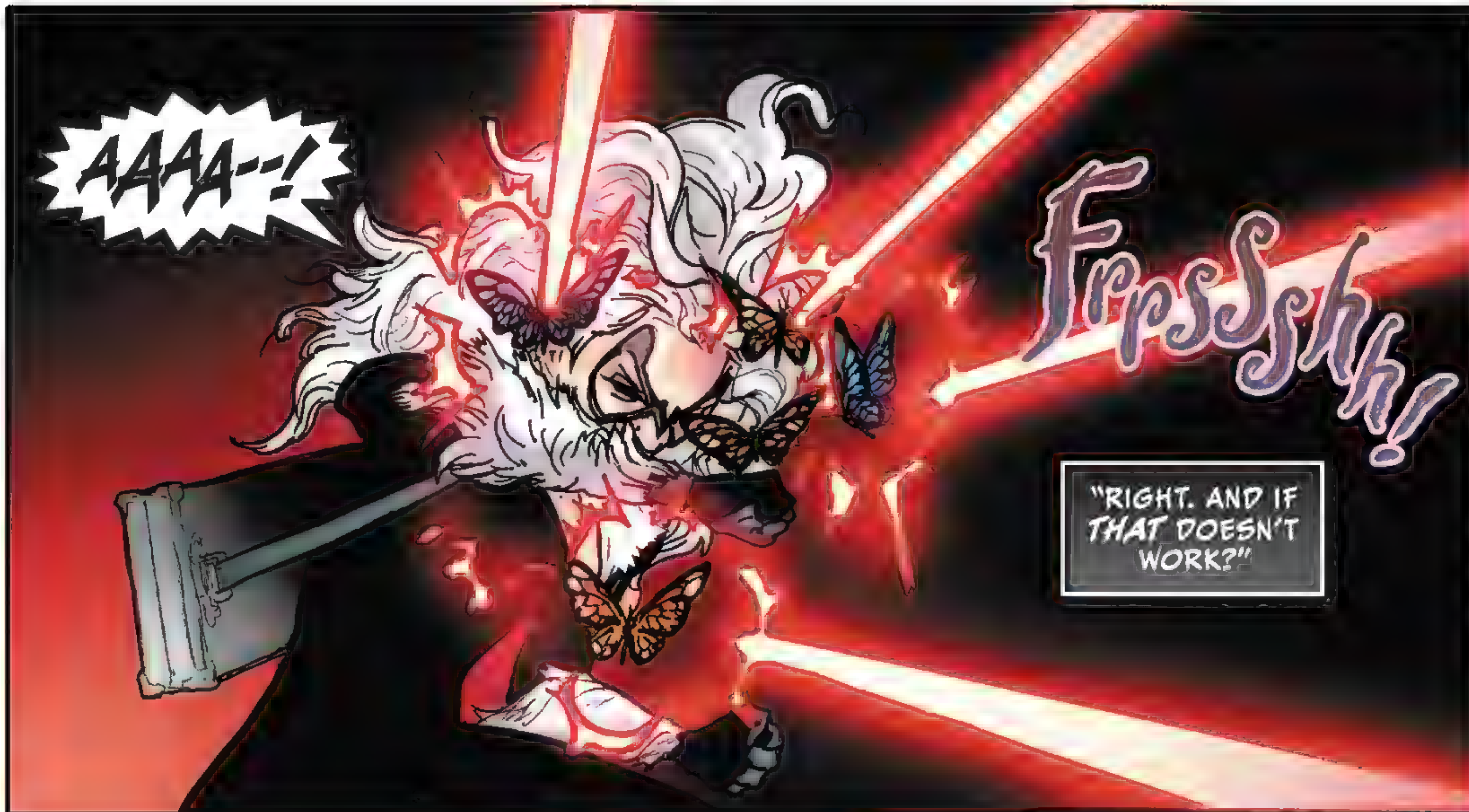


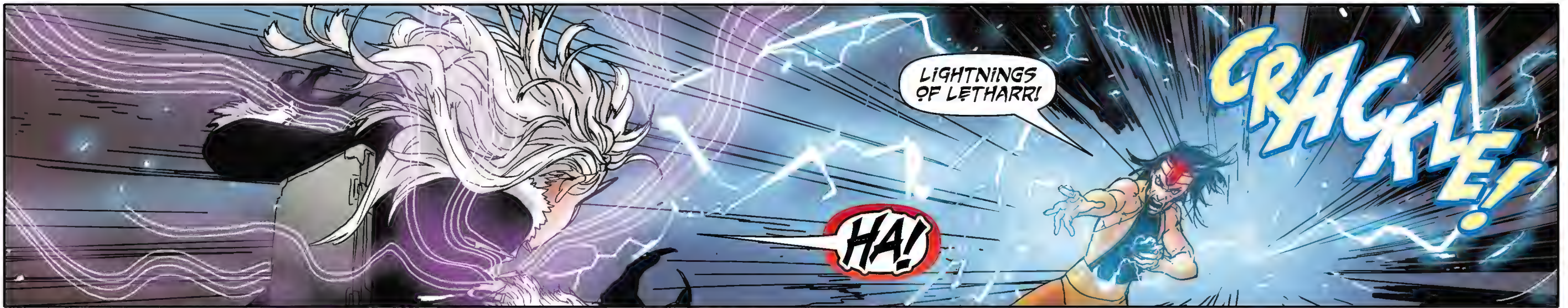
Oh, DUH, BATS CAN JUST SHOW US OUT--

Oooh NNOoo...





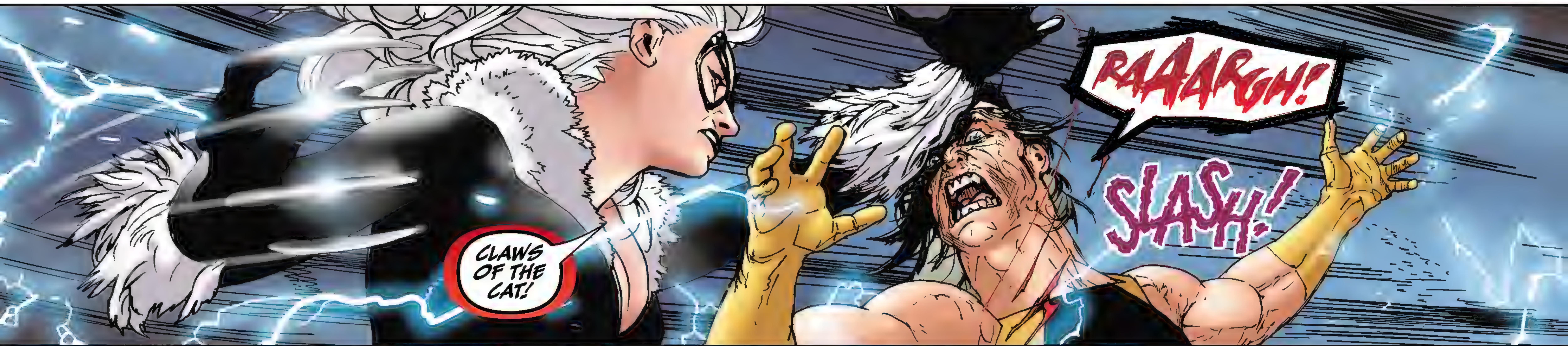




LIGHTNINGS
OF LETHARRI!

CRACKLE!

HA!



CLAWS
OF THE
CAT!

RAAARGH!

SLASH!



Grff...grff...
WHAT'S HAPPENING
HERE?

SHE...
gah...HAS
AN IMPLANTED
QUANTUM
PROBABILITY
RIG.

ENGLISH?
OR DOG,
THAT WORKS,
TOO.



"SHE GENERATES BAD
LUCK, THE OPPOSITE OF...
SO-CALLED 'MAGIC.'"

"WHERE XANDER...
CONSCIOUSLY
ALTERS
PROBABILITIES
TO MAKE THE
IMPOSSIBLE
HAPPEN...urk..."

"...FE--
SILVER SABLE--
UNCONSCIOUSLY
ERODES THOSE
ALTERATIONS,
UNRAVELING
THIS 'MAGIC,'
EMITTING
ENTROPY."

"TRANSMUTING THAT
WHICH WOULD HARM HER
INTO MERE FANCY."

HARVIN'S
HOARY
HAMMERS!

FLAMES
OF THE
FALTINE!

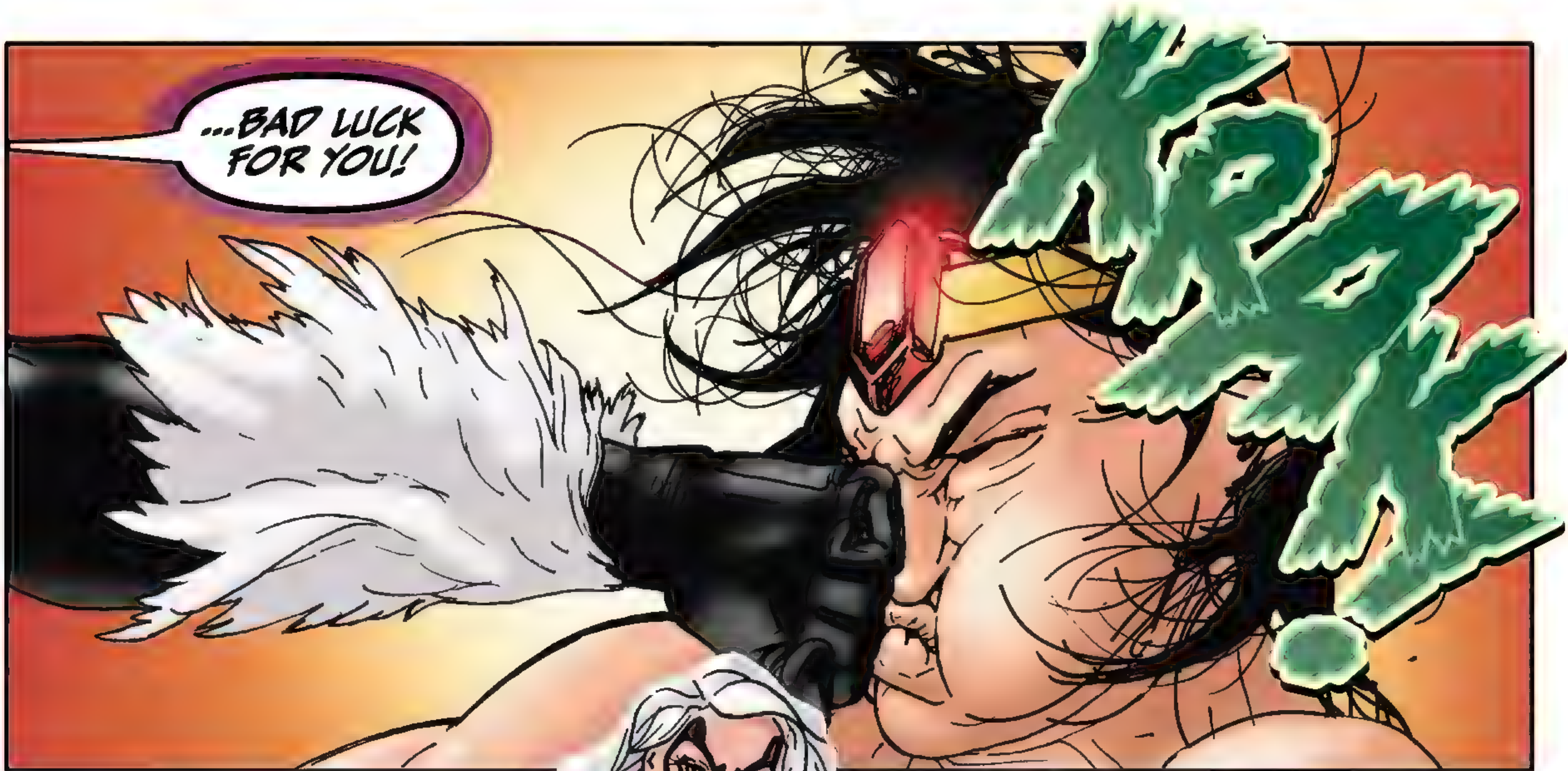
HA!

GO ON,
BABE, KEEP
TRYING!

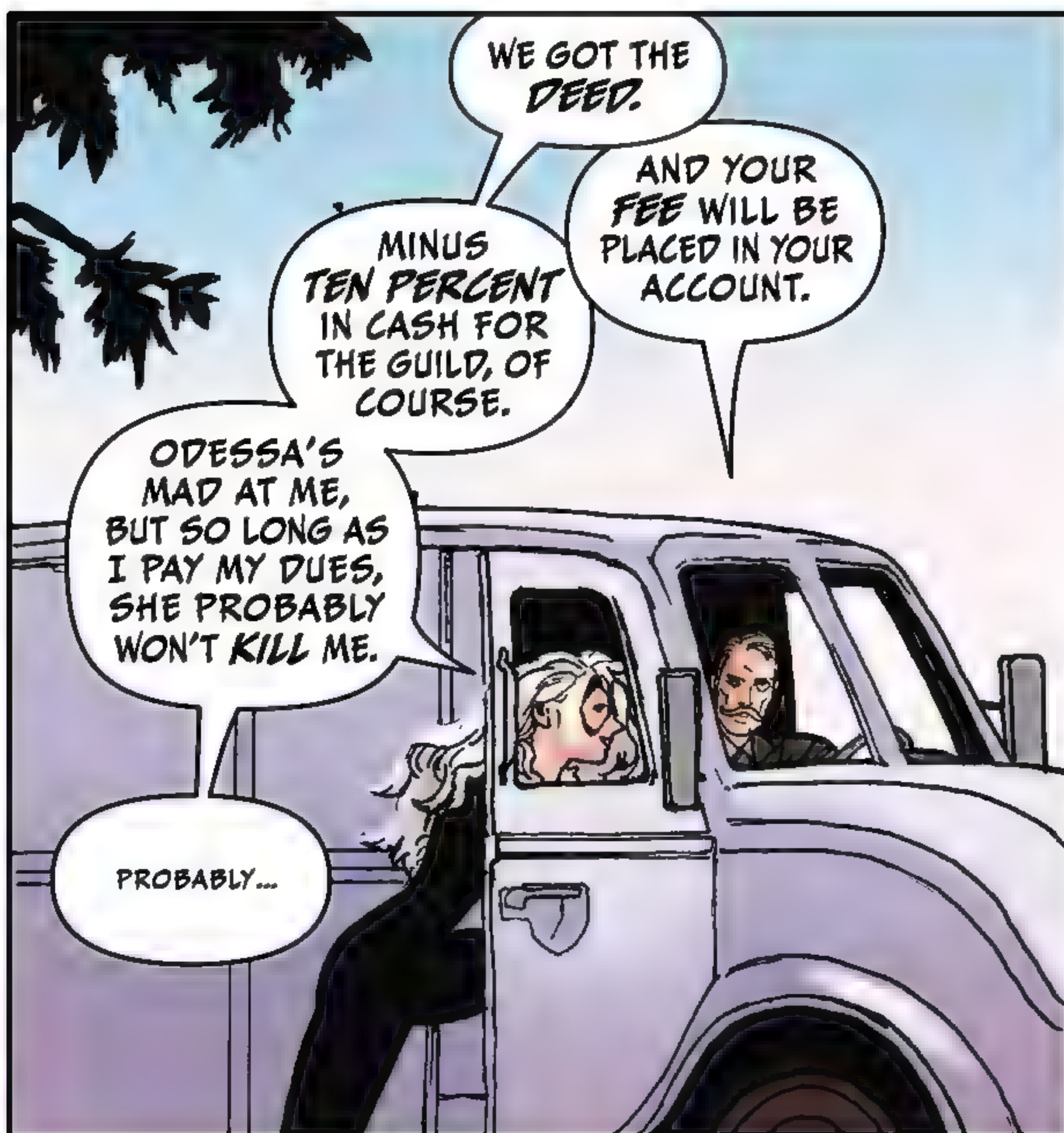
I'VE ONLY
GOT NINE LIVES,
YOU'LL GET ME
EVENTUALLY!



GOOD
LUCK FOR
ME...







WE GOT THE DEED.

MINUS TEN PERCENT IN CASH FOR THE GUILD, OF COURSE.

AND YOUR FEE WILL BE PLACED IN YOUR ACCOUNT.

ODESSA'S MAD AT ME, BUT SO LONG AS I PAY MY DUES, SHE PROBABLY WON'T KILL ME.

PROBABLY...



FOX. DISH. WHAT'S ALL THIS SCAVENGER HUNT STUFF ABOUT?

I'M NO HIRED HELP, FOXY, DON'T TALK TO ME LIKE I'M ORDINARY PEOPLE.

A CAPER, DARLING. THE BIGGEST MONKEYSHINE THIS TOWN HAS SEEN SINCE THE DUTCH FIRST STOLE IT.

I'M THE BLACK CAT.

CUT ME IN.



I ALWAYS PLANNED TO, MY DEAR.

I'LL EXPLAIN AS WE READY FOR THE NEXT JOB.

TELL ME, HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO YANCY STREET?

EPILOGUE



???

WHAT HAPPENED HERE?!

NO ONE HERE BUT US DUMB ANIMALS...





"ONE WEEK.

Hmm...

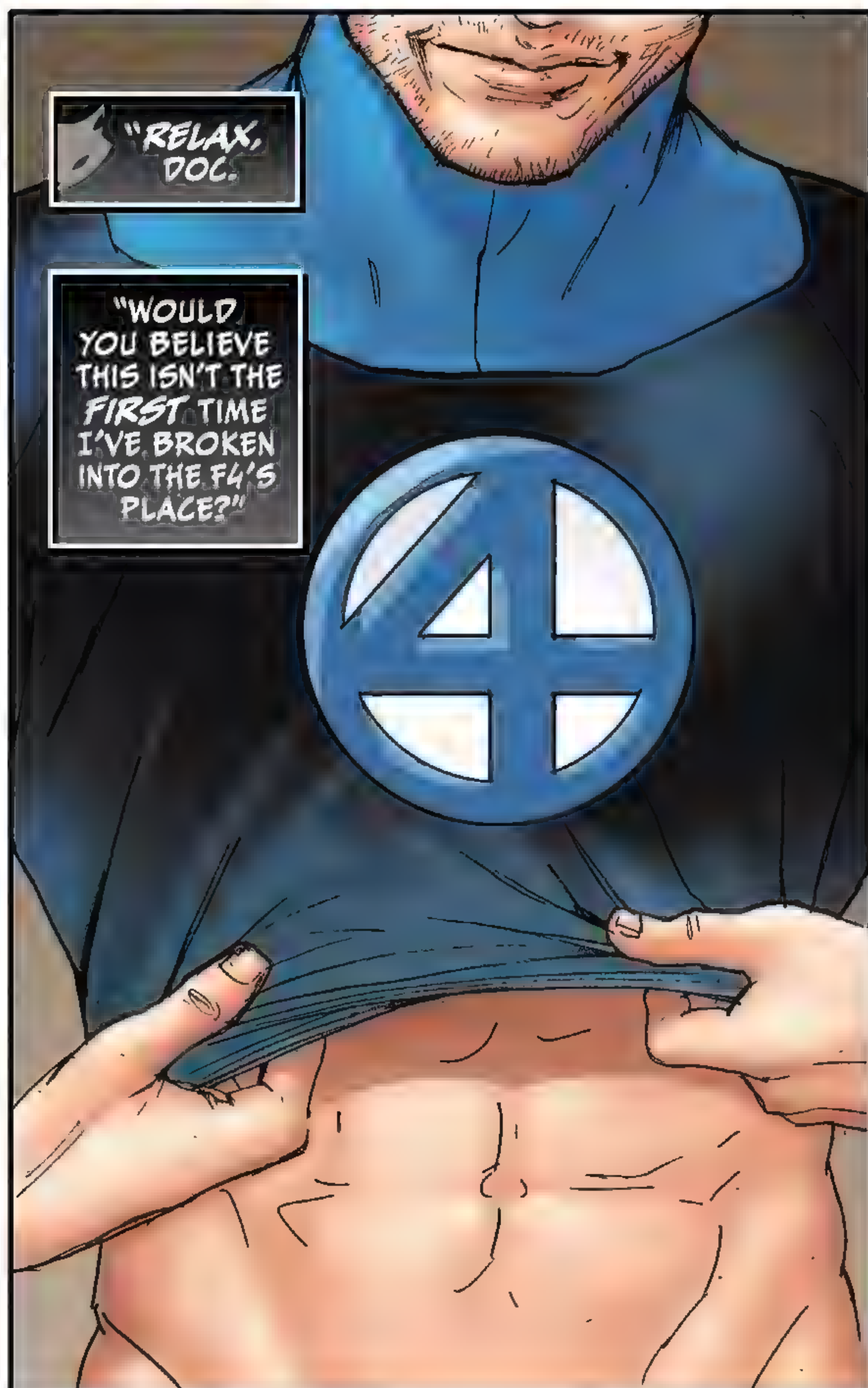
FOOM...?

...OR
HOMME DE
FER?



"ONE WEEK
SINCE
WE STOLE
FROM DR.
STRANGE.

"AND NOW
WE'RE RIPPING
OFF THE
FANTASTIC
FOUR?
WHAT'S NEXT,
AVENGERS
MOUNTAIN?"



"RELAX,
DOC.

"WOULD
YOU BELIEVE
THIS ISN'T THE
FIRST TIME
I'VE BROKEN
INTO THE F4'S
PLACE?"



NOK!
NOK!

"BESIDES,
I'M NOT EVEN
GOING TO
BREAK IN.

"THIS
TIME..."



FEL-ICIA.

JOHNNY.

MEE-YOW--

"...I'M GOING
TO WALK IN THE
FRONT DOOR."

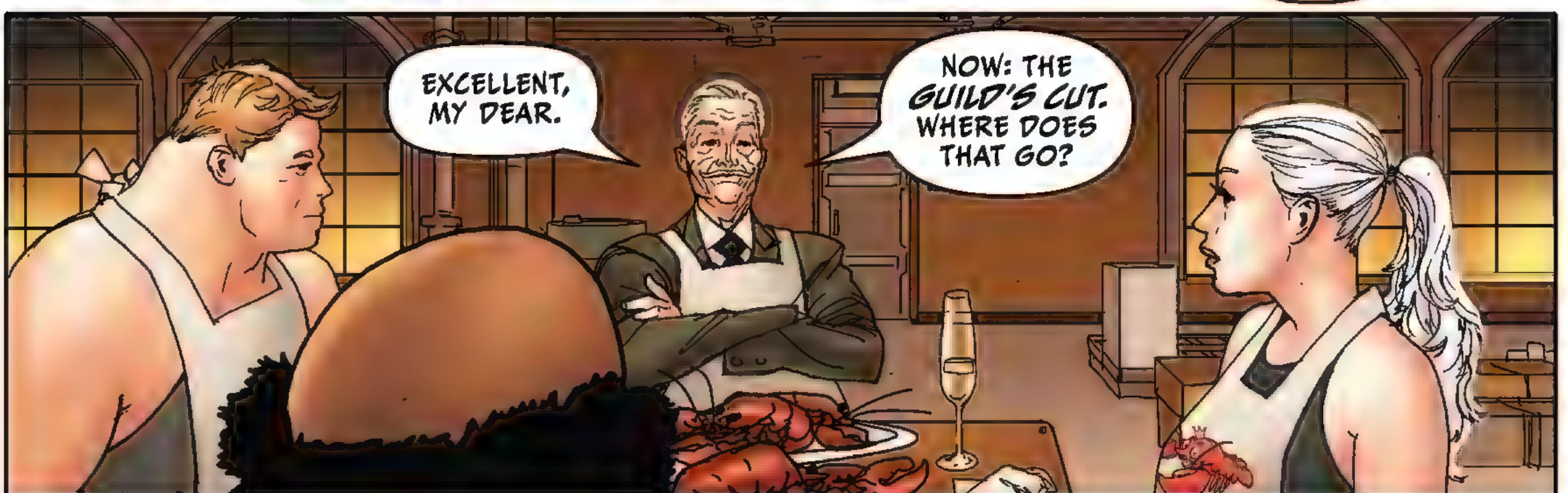
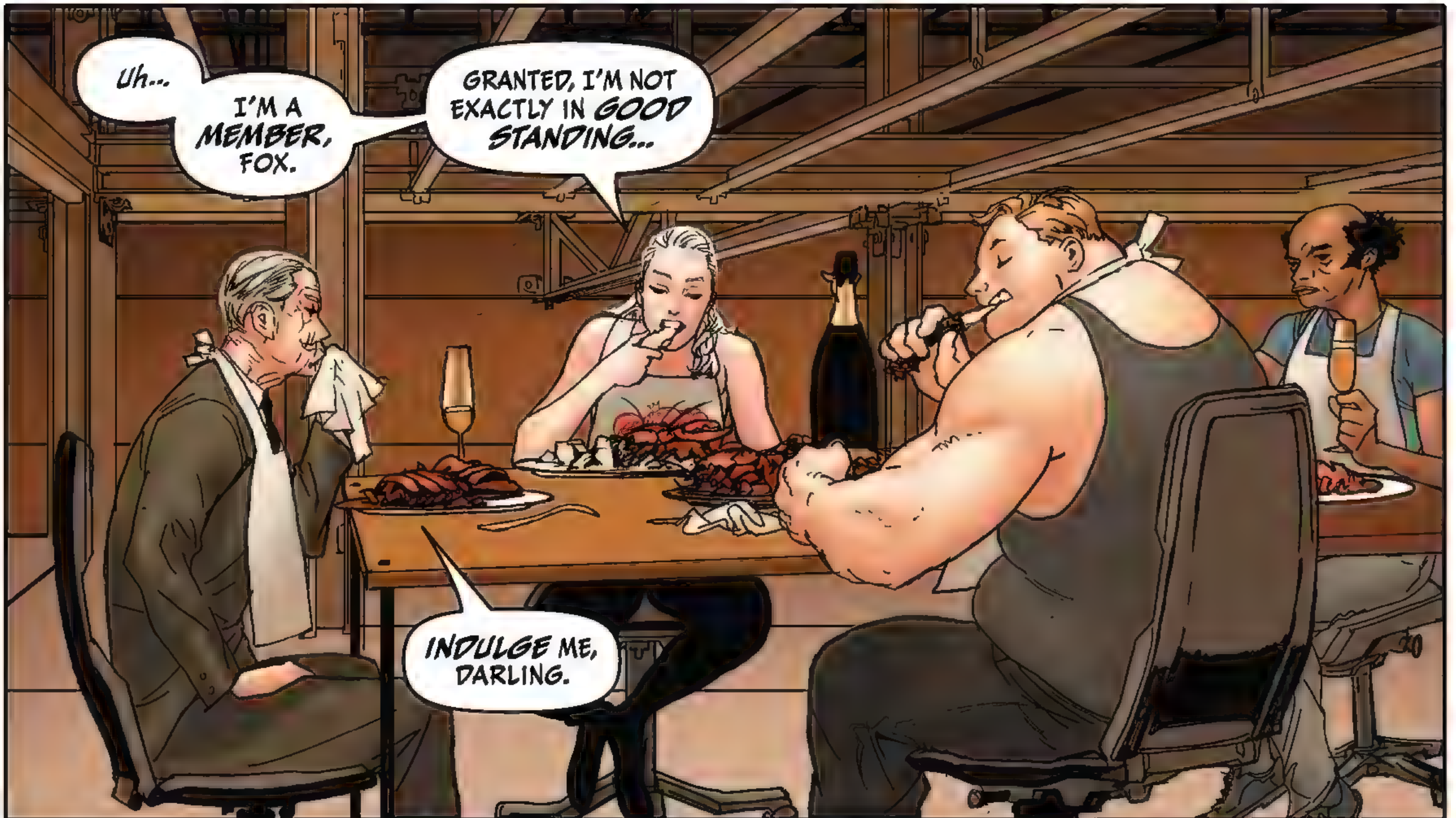
"JUST..."

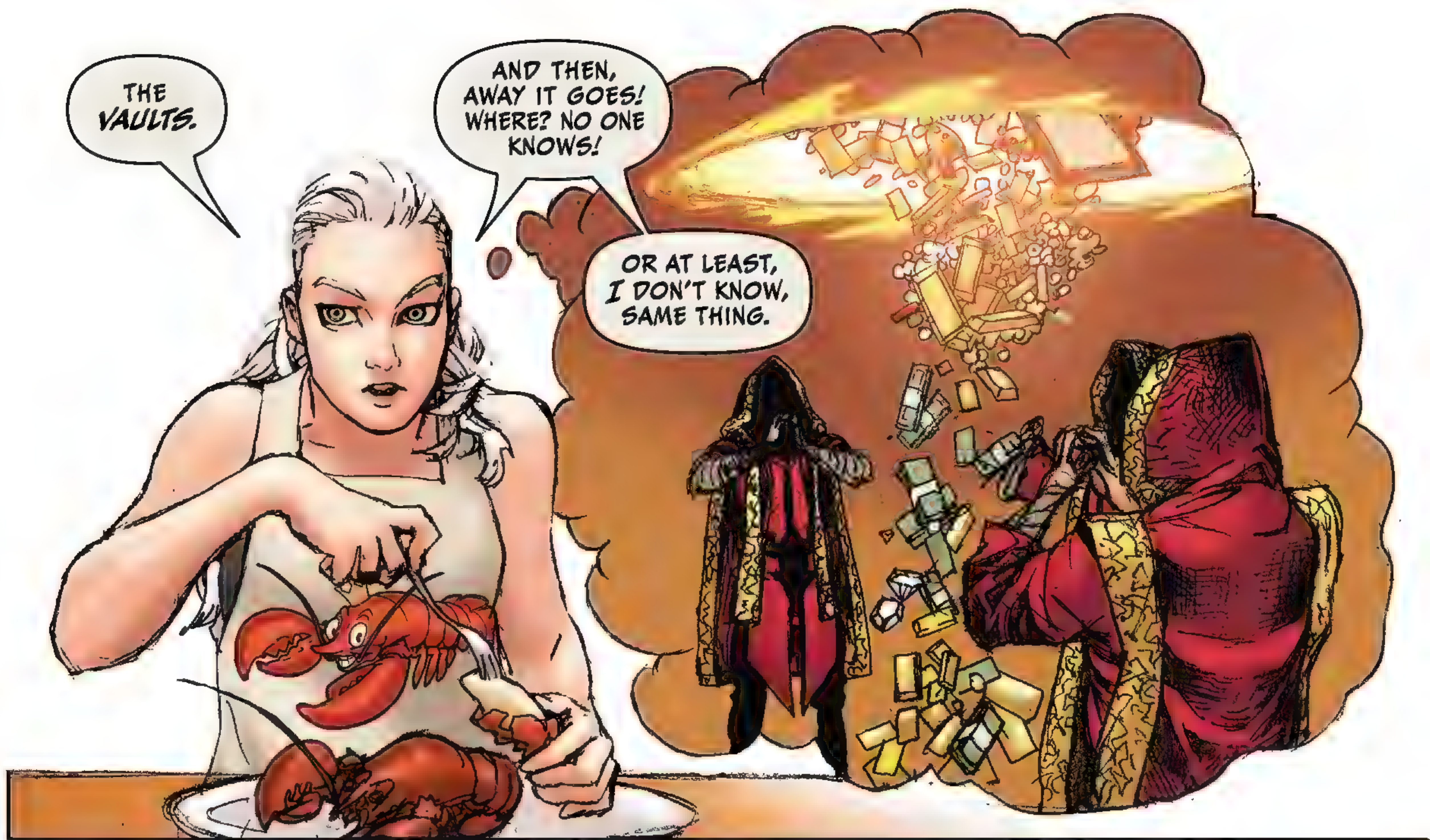
"...LIKE..."

I WENT
WITH FOOM.

"...THAT."

FANTASTIC.

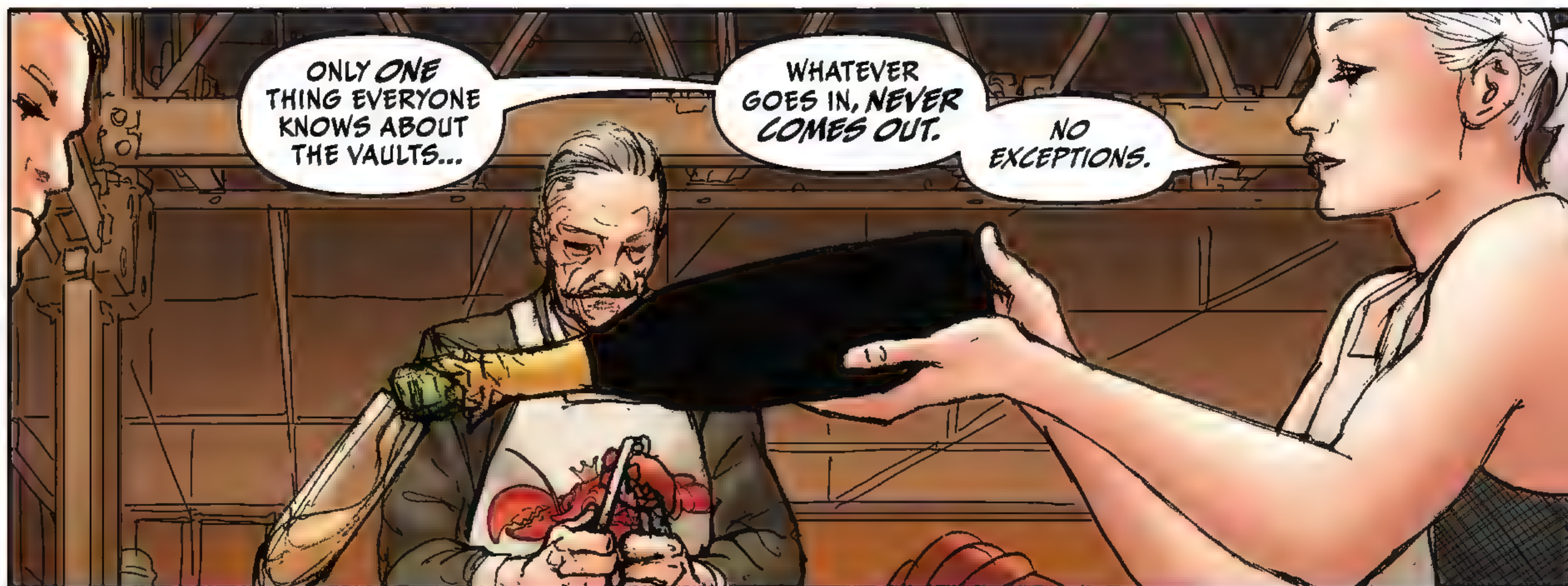




THE
VAULTS.

AND THEN,
AWAY IT GOES!
WHERE? NO ONE
KNOWS!

OR AT LEAST,
I DON'T KNOW,
SAME THING.



ONLY ONE
THING EVERYONE
KNOWS ABOUT
THE VAULTS...

WHATEVER
GOES IN, NEVER
COMES OUT.

NO
EXCEPTIONS.



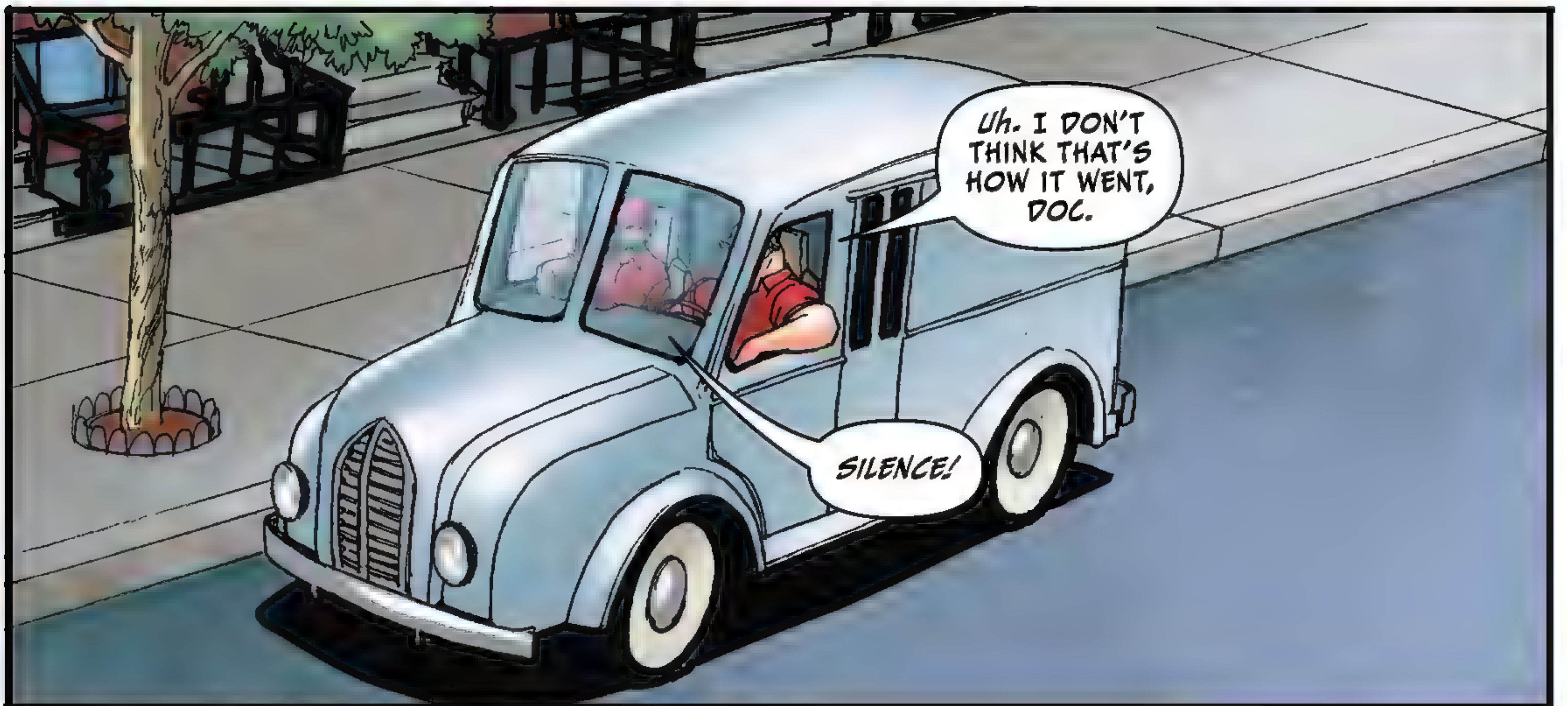
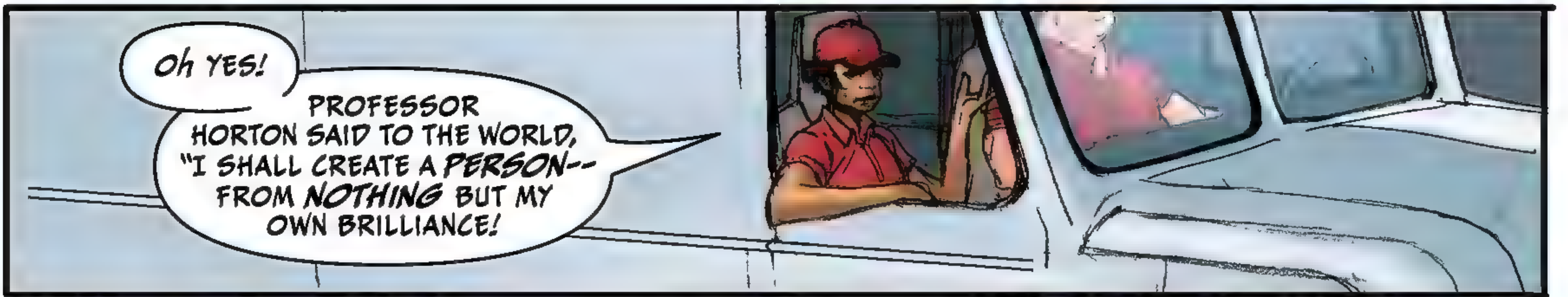
EXACTLY.

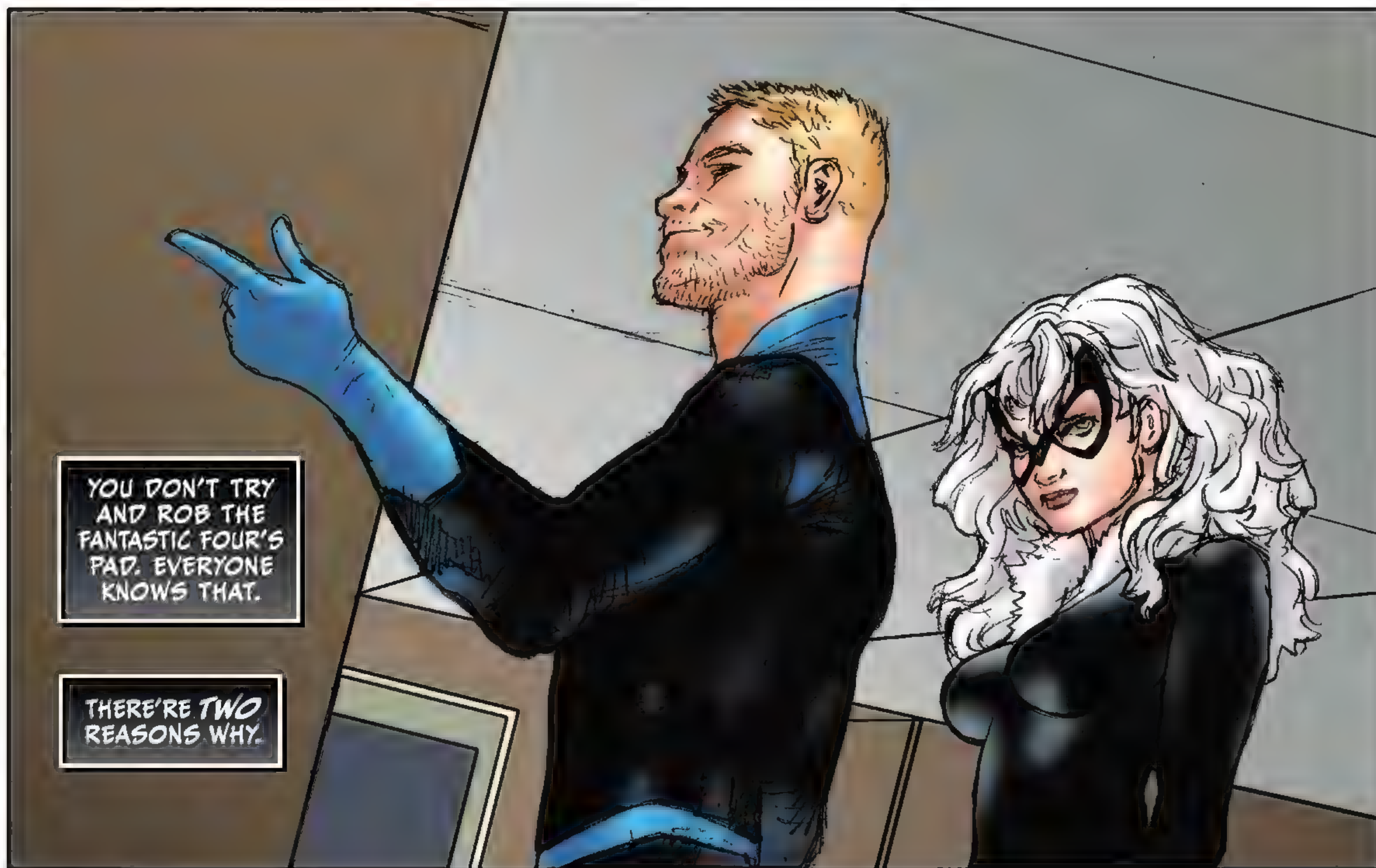
THE VAULTS
OF THE NEW YORK
THIEVES GUILD.
IMPENETRABLE.
IMPREGNABLE.
IMPOSSIBLE.



WE'RE
GOING TO
CRACK
THEM!

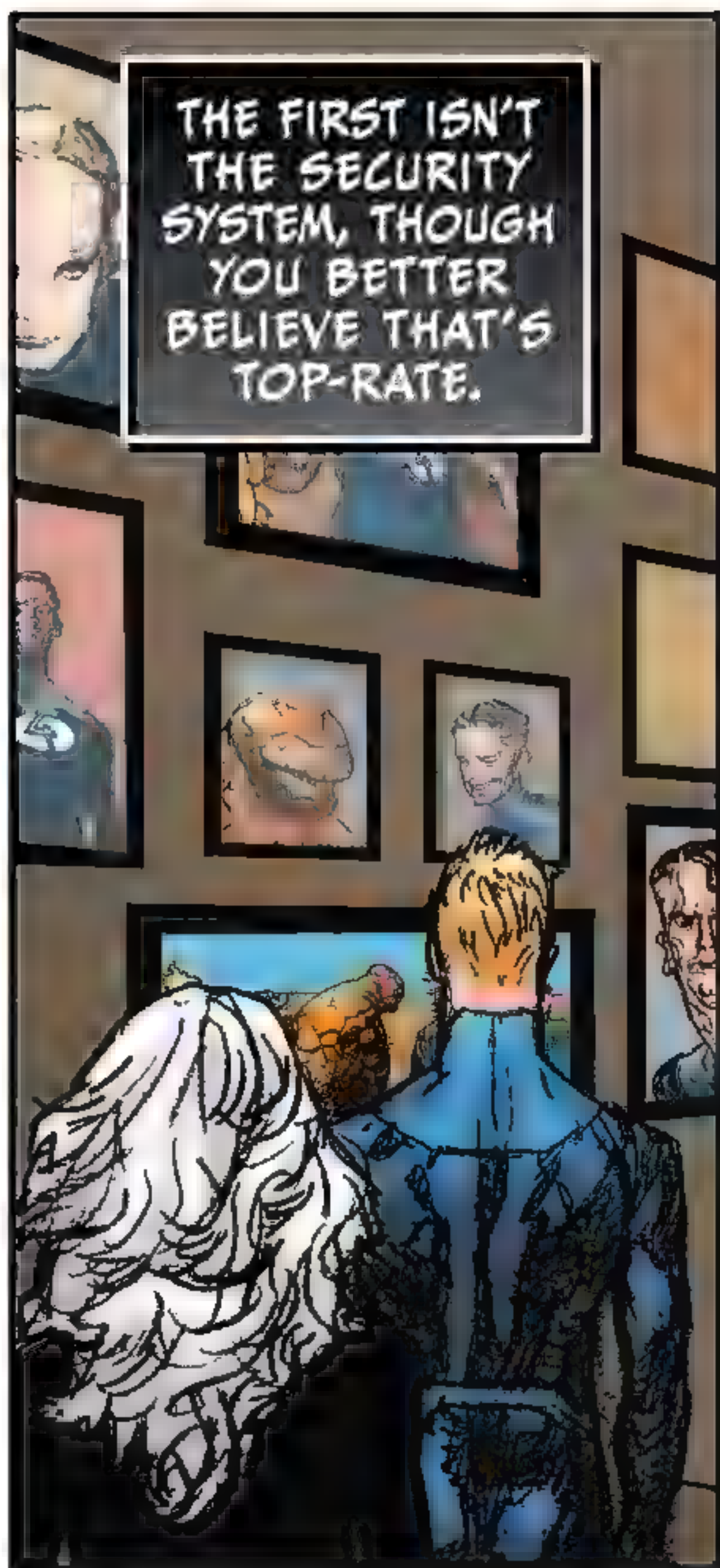
KRRK!





YOU DON'T TRY
AND ROB THE
FANTASTIC FOUR'S
PAD. EVERYONE
KNOWS THAT.

THERE'RE *TWO*
REASONS WHY.



THE FIRST ISN'T
THE SECURITY
SYSTEM, THOUGH
YOU BETTER
BELIEVE THAT'S
TOP-RATE.

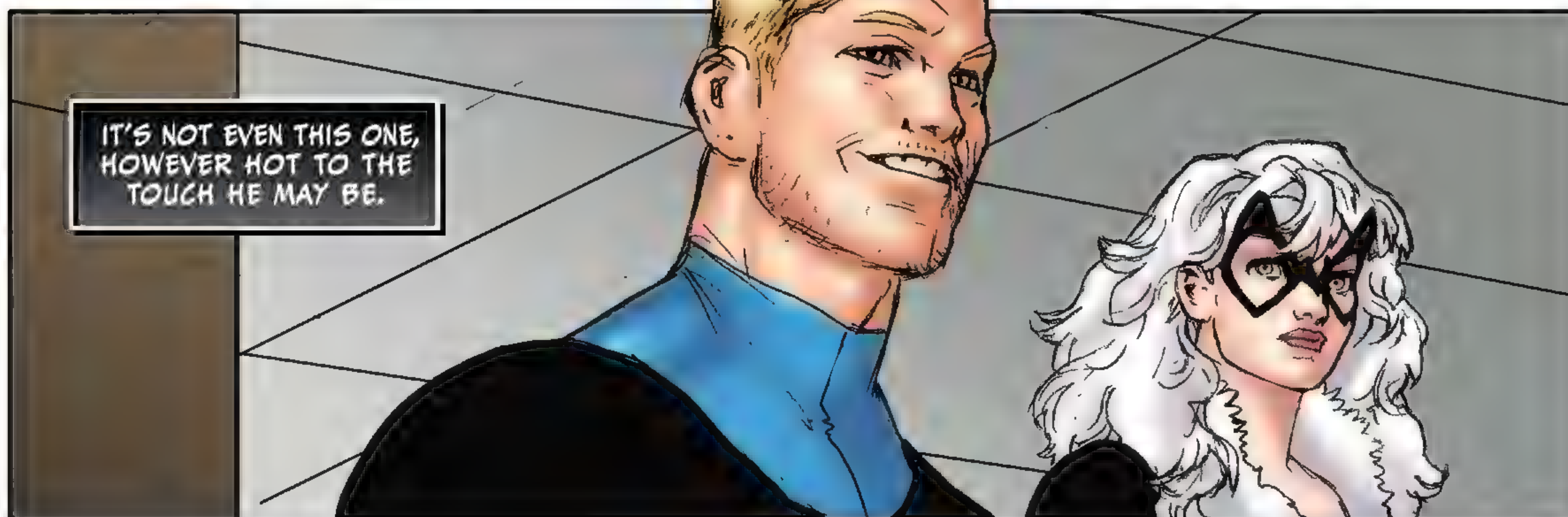


IT'S NOT THE GUY MADE
OUT OF BRICKS WHO CAN
BENCH A CITY BLOCK.

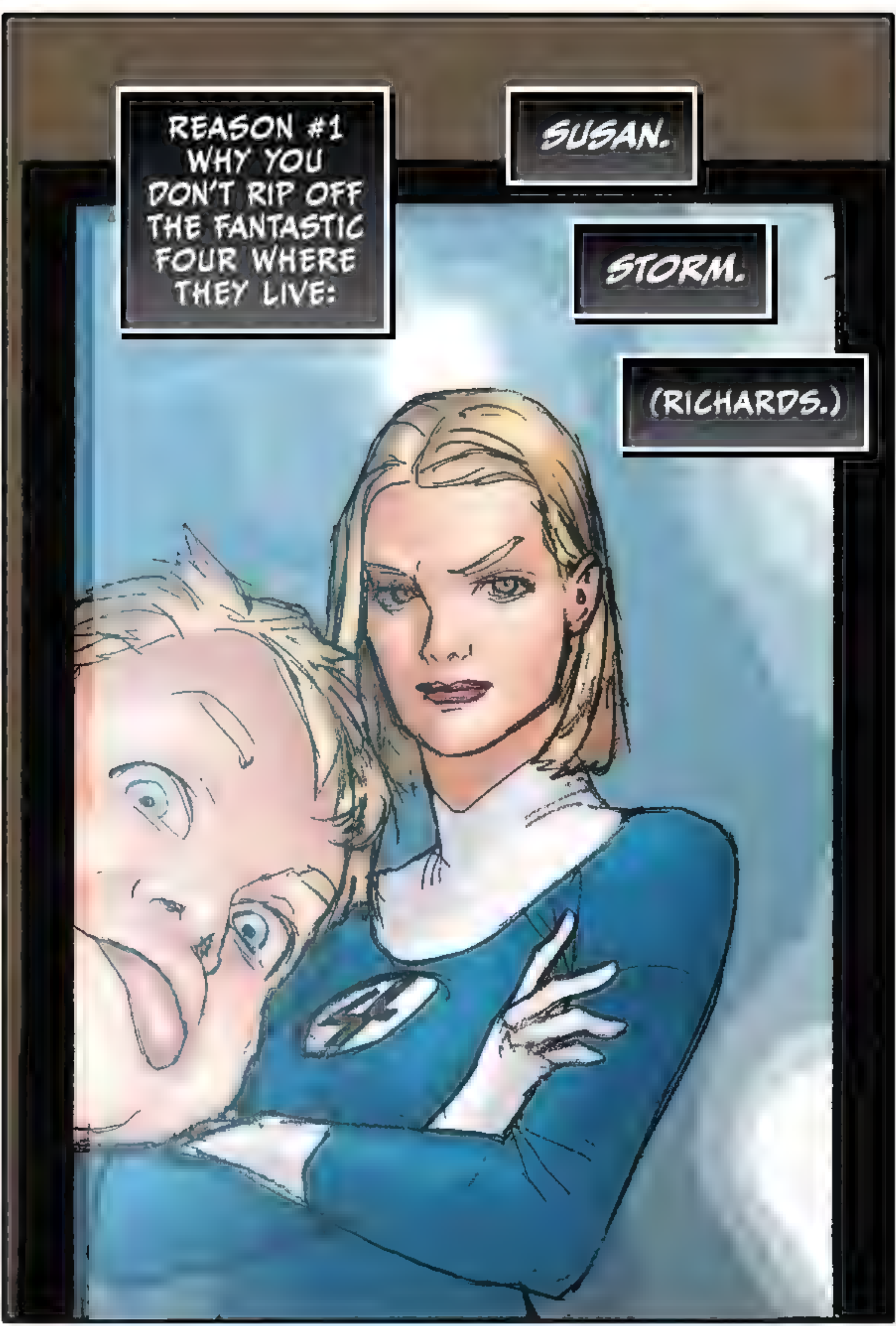


IT'S
NOT THE
WORLD'S
SMARTEST
DAD.

(WHO I AM
SURE CAN
THINK YOU
TO DEATH OR
SOMETHING.)



IT'S NOT EVEN THIS ONE,
HOWEVER HOT TO THE
TOUCH HE MAY BE.





NO COMPLICATIONS.

SO WHO ARE WE STAKING OUT?

THE THINKER?

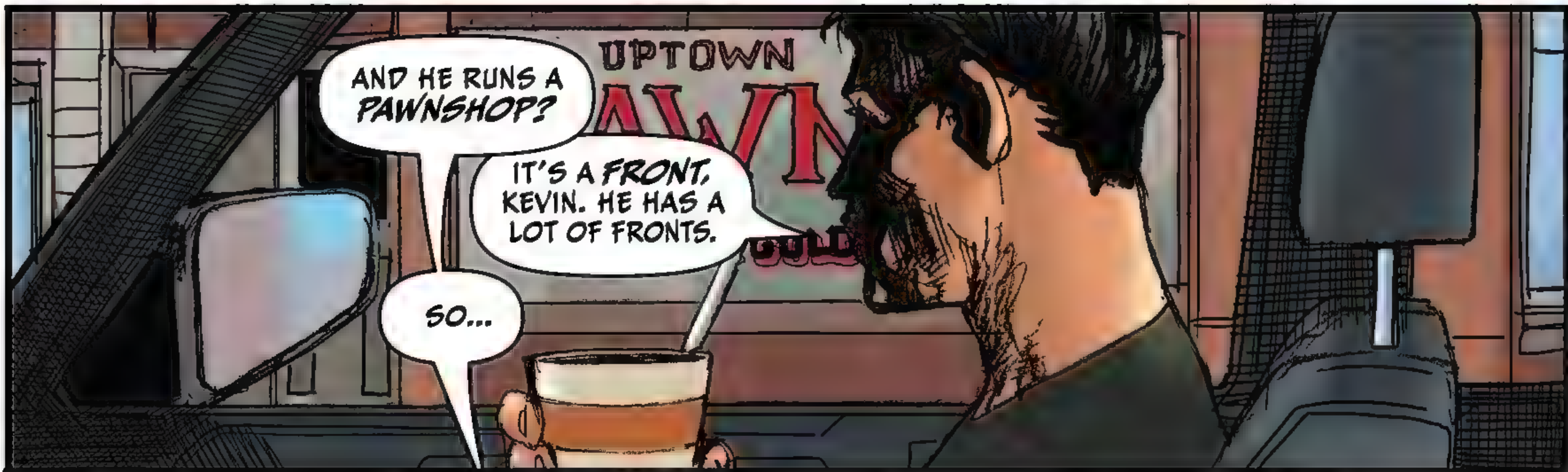


TINKERER. THE TERRIBLE TINKERER.

Snrk.

SOUNDS LIKE A REAL WORLD-BEATER.

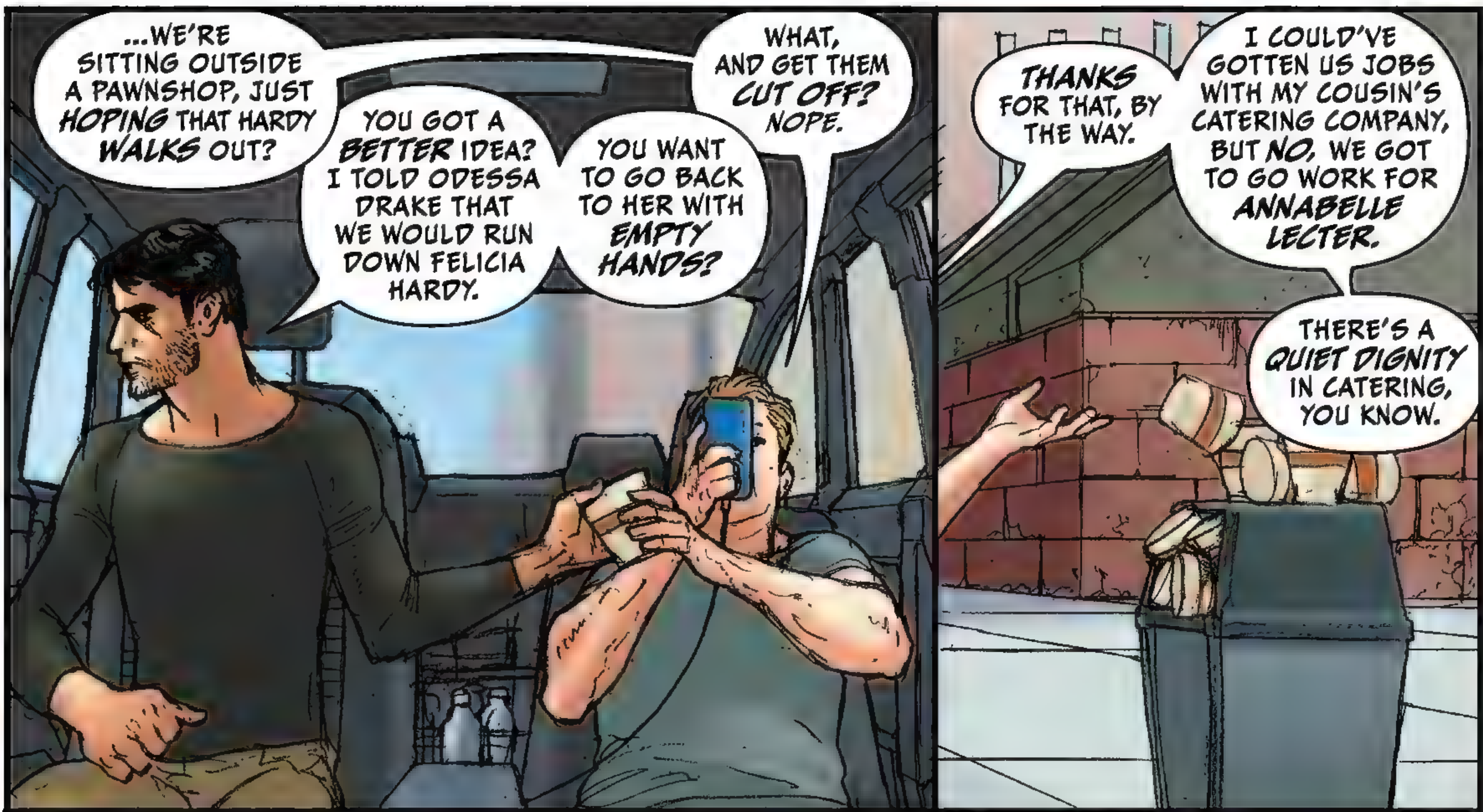
SUPPLIER TO THE SUPER-CRIME SET. KNOWN ASSOCIATE OF FELICIA HARDY.



AND HE RUNS A PAWNSHOP?

IT'S A FRONT, KEVIN. HE HAS A LOT OF FRONTS.

SO...



...WE'RE SITTING OUTSIDE A PAWNSHOP, JUST HOPING THAT HARDY WALKS OUT?

YOU GOT A BETTER IDEA? I TOLD ODESSA DRAKE THAT WE WOULD RUN DOWN FELICIA HARDY.

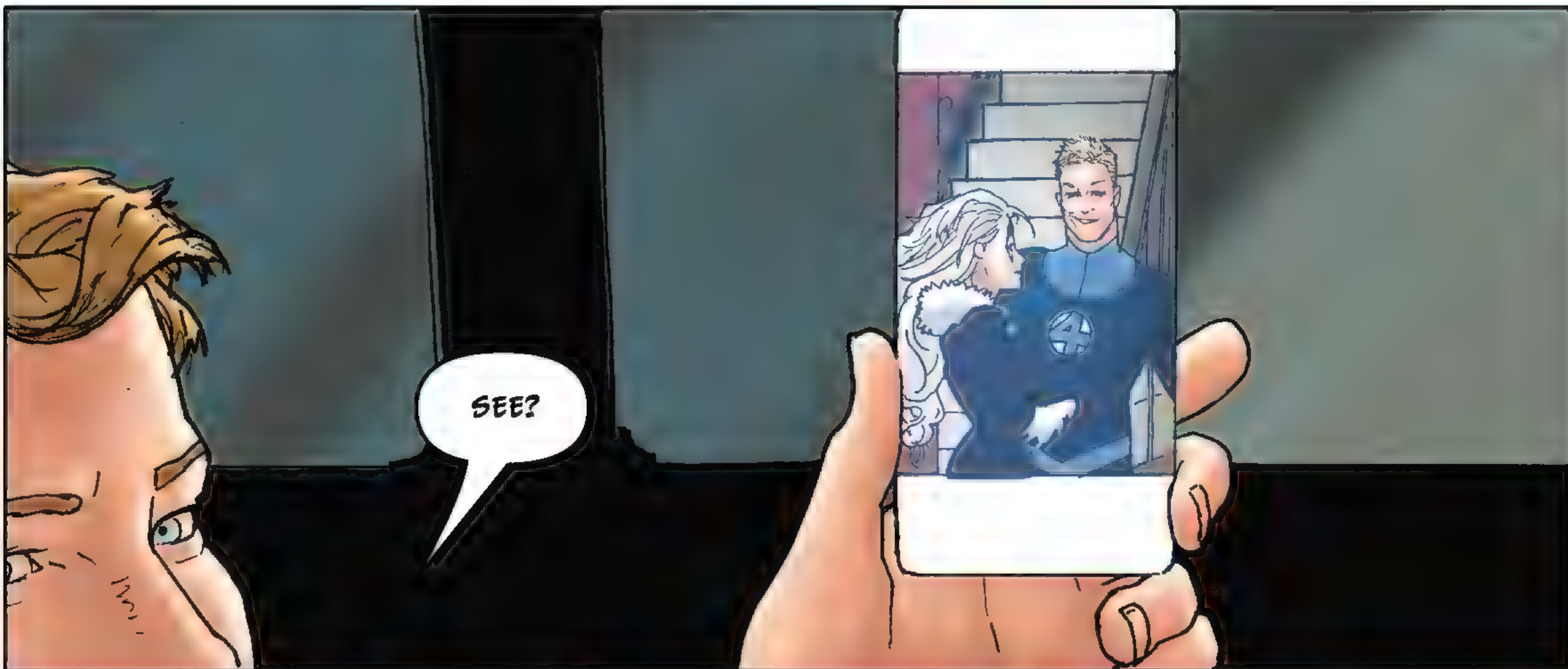
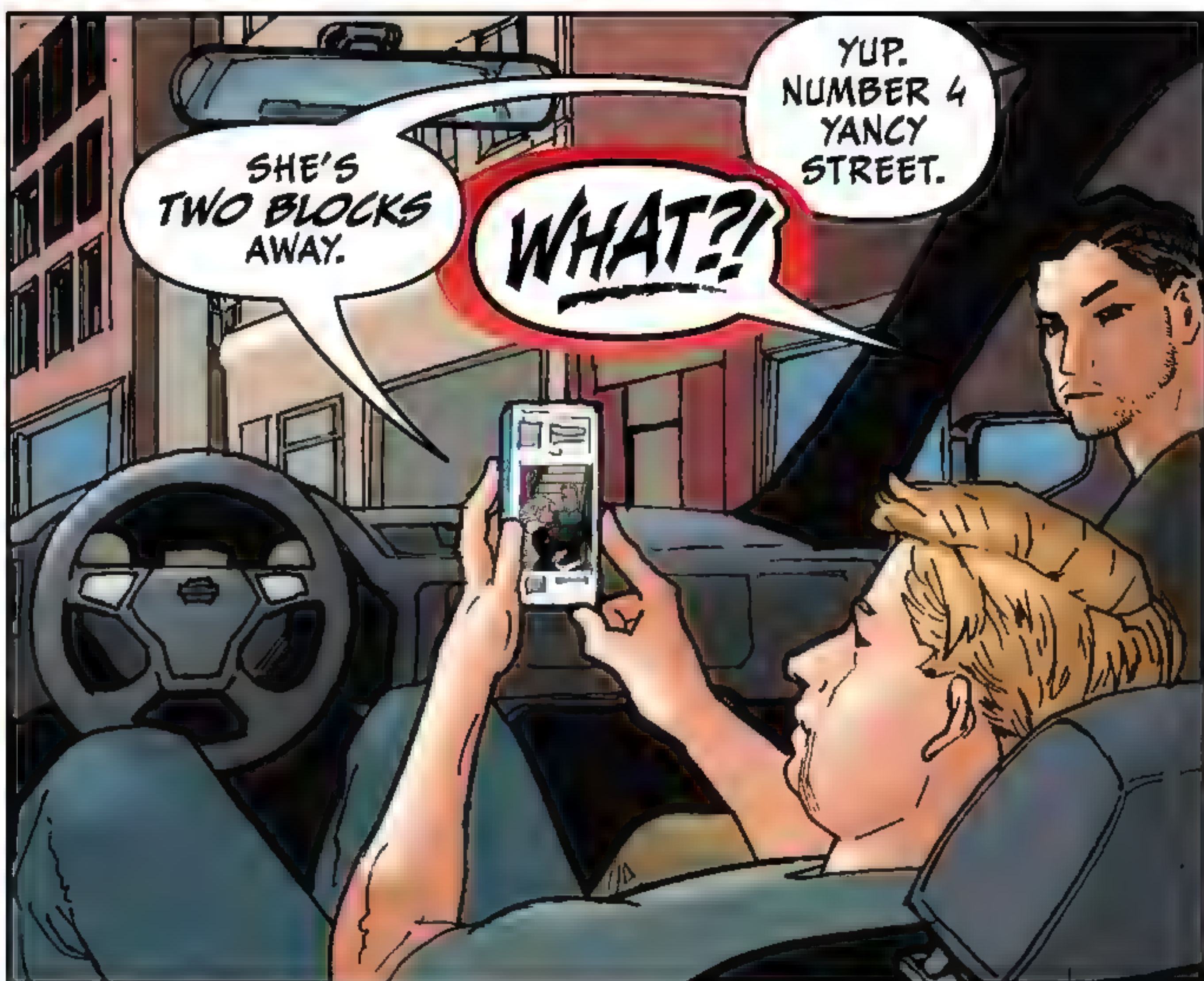
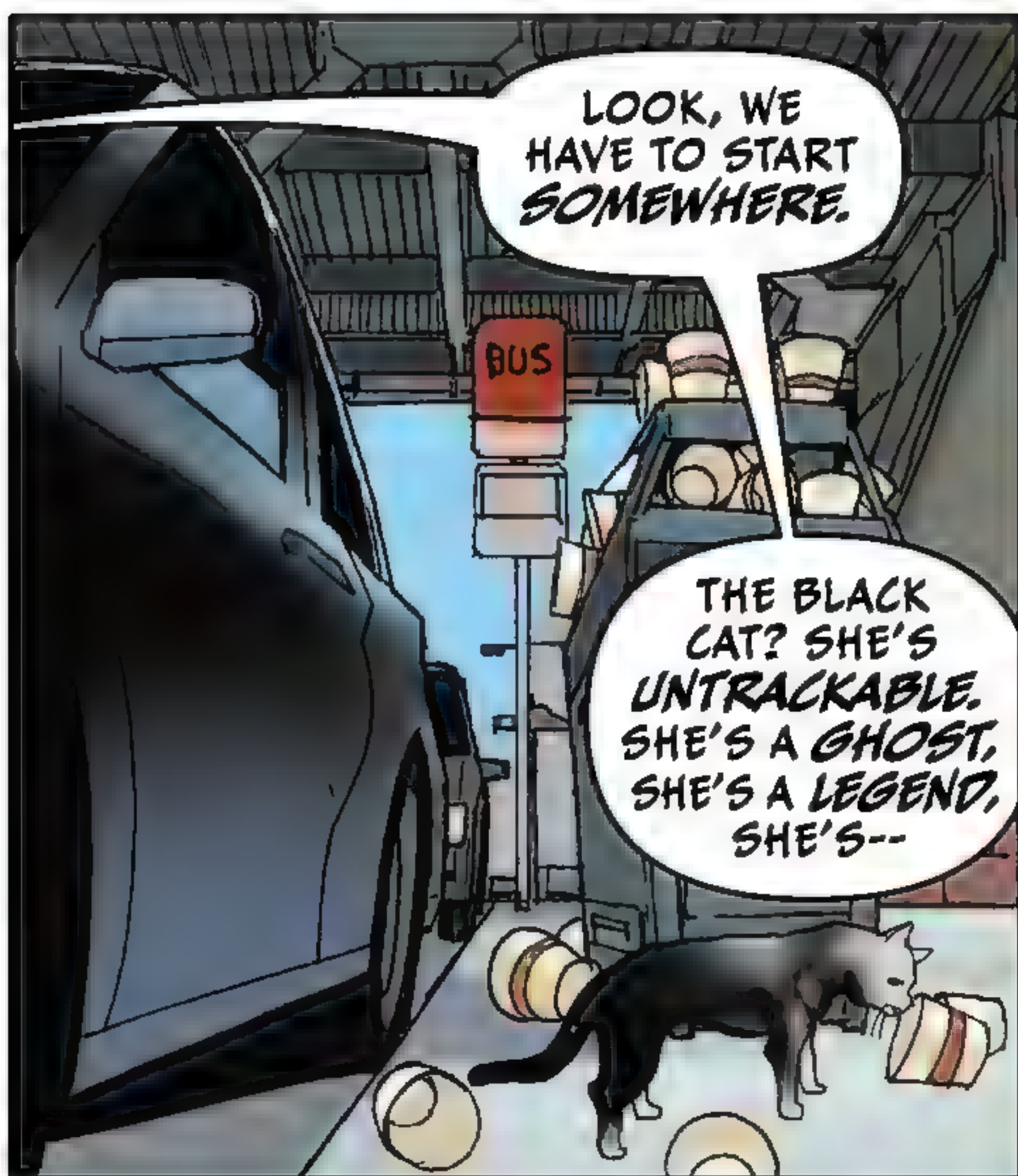
YOU WANT TO GO BACK TO HER WITH EMPTY HANDS?

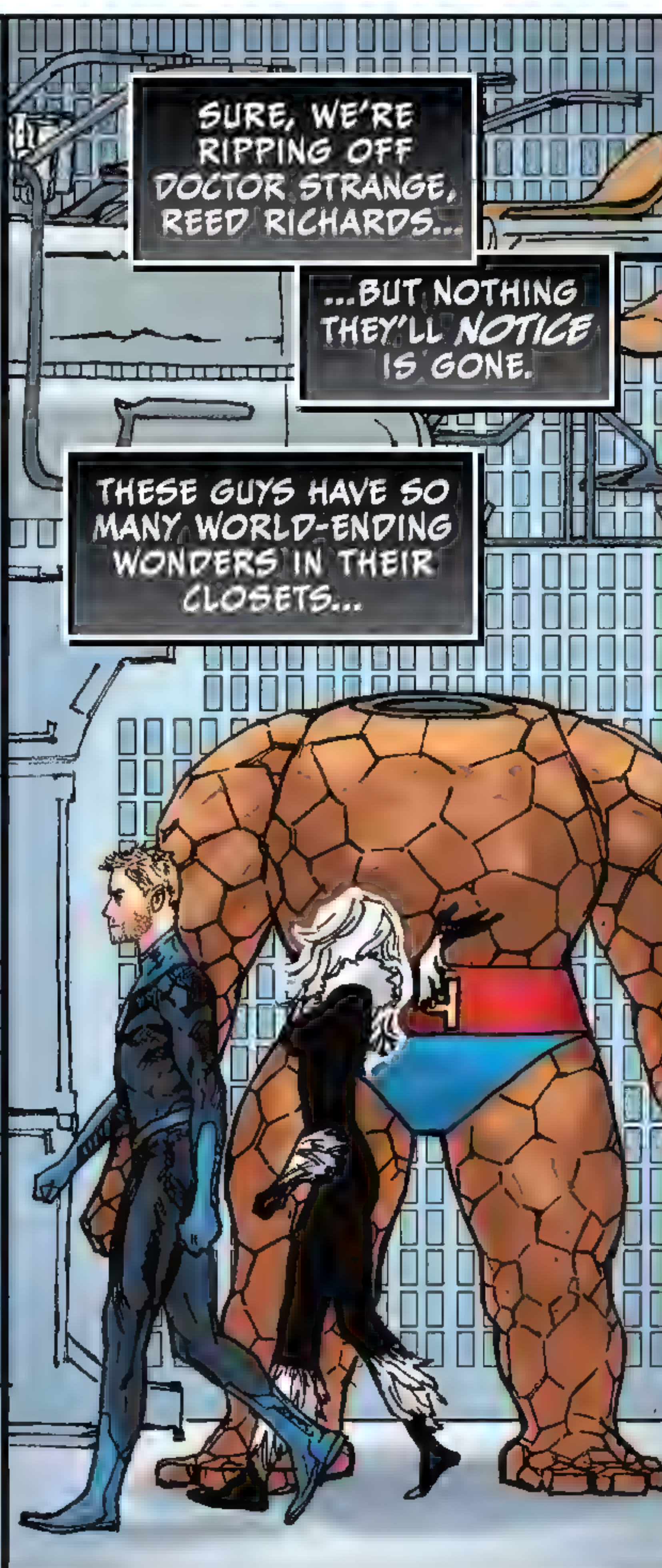
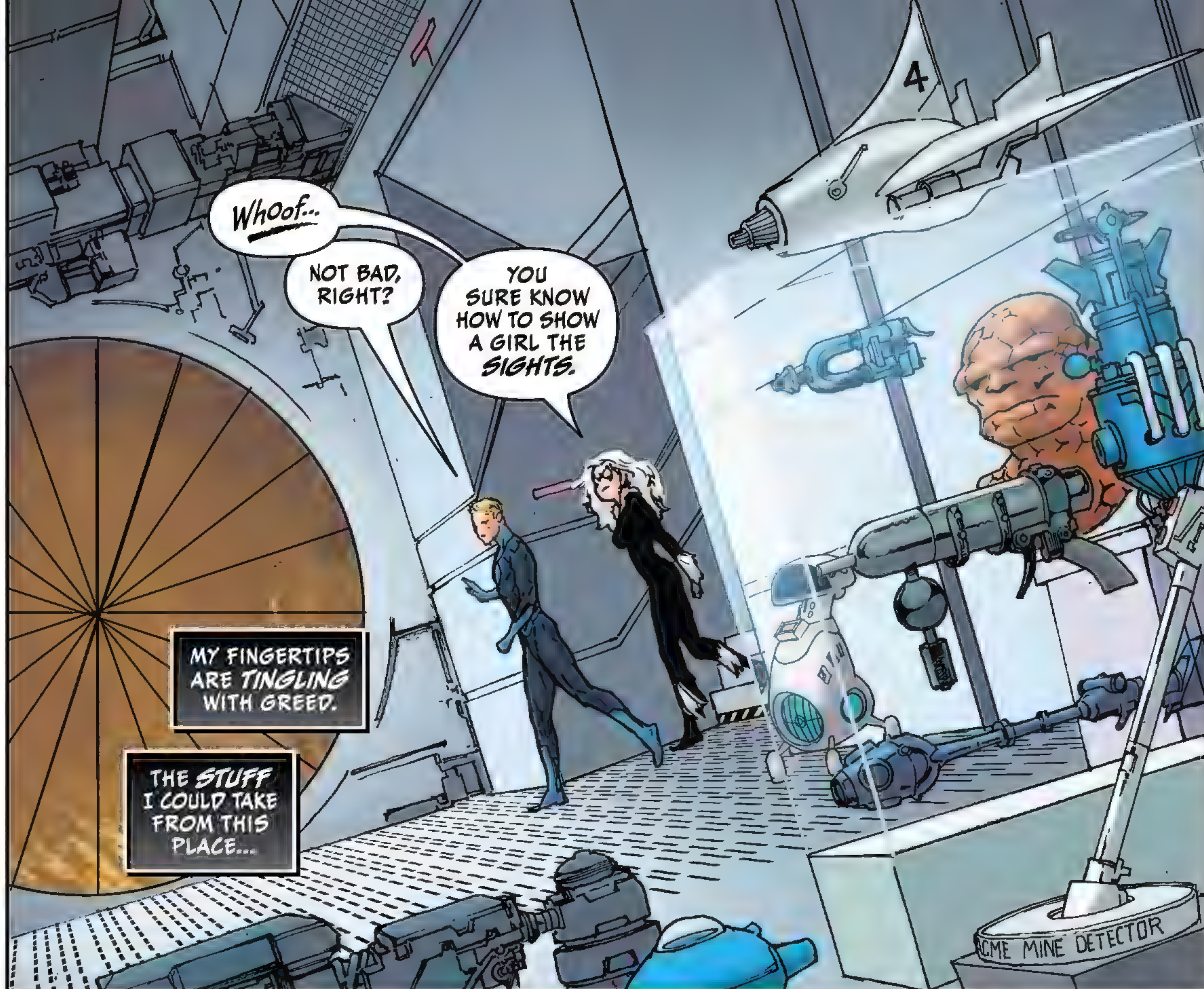
WHAT, AND GET THEM CUT OFF? NOPE.

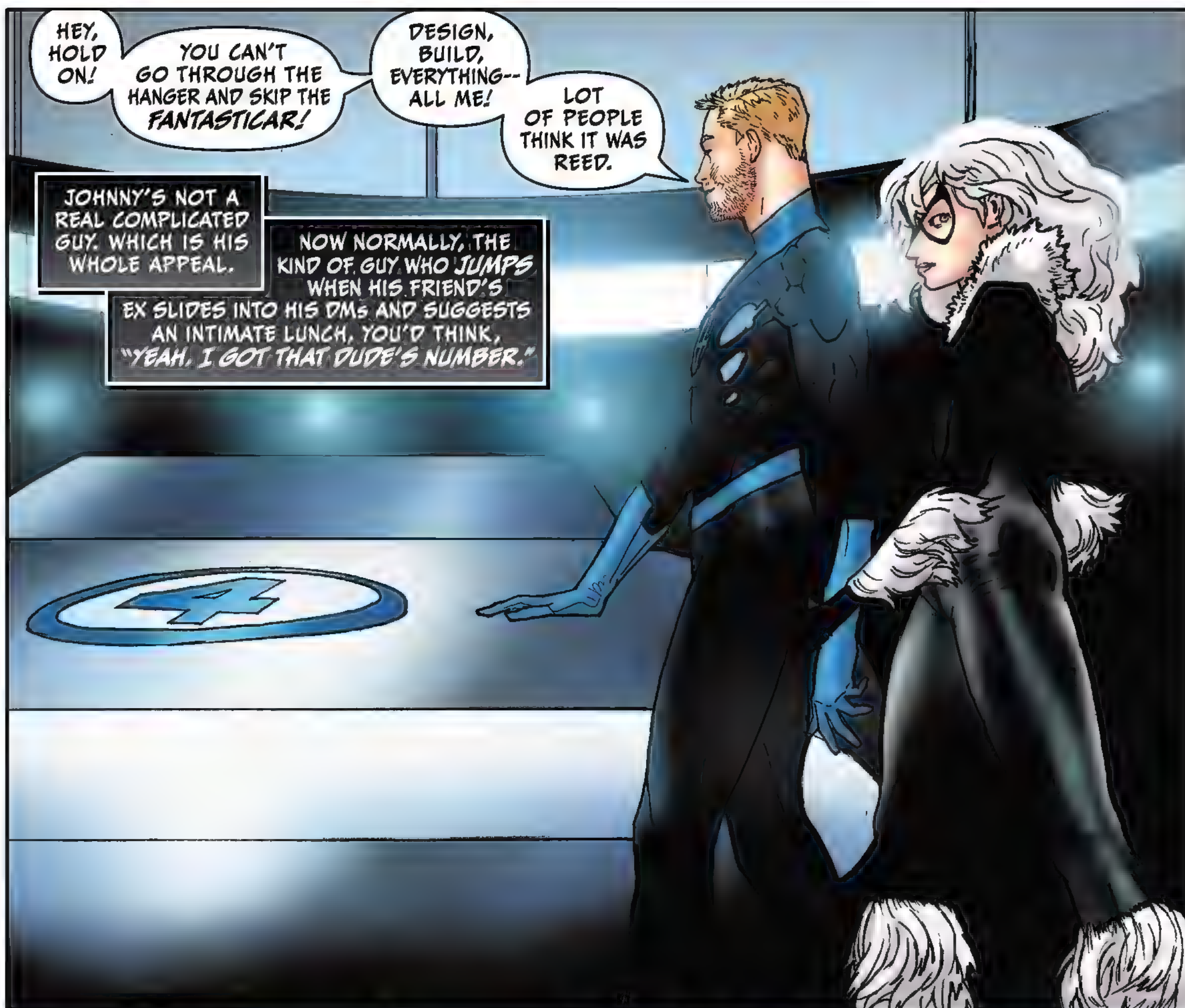
THANKS FOR THAT, BY THE WAY.

I COULD'VE GOTTEN US JOBS WITH MY COUSIN'S CATERING COMPANY, BUT NO, WE GOT TO GO WORK FOR ANNABELLE LECTER.

THERE'S A QUIET DIGNITY IN CATERING, YOU KNOW.







HEY,
HOLD
ON!

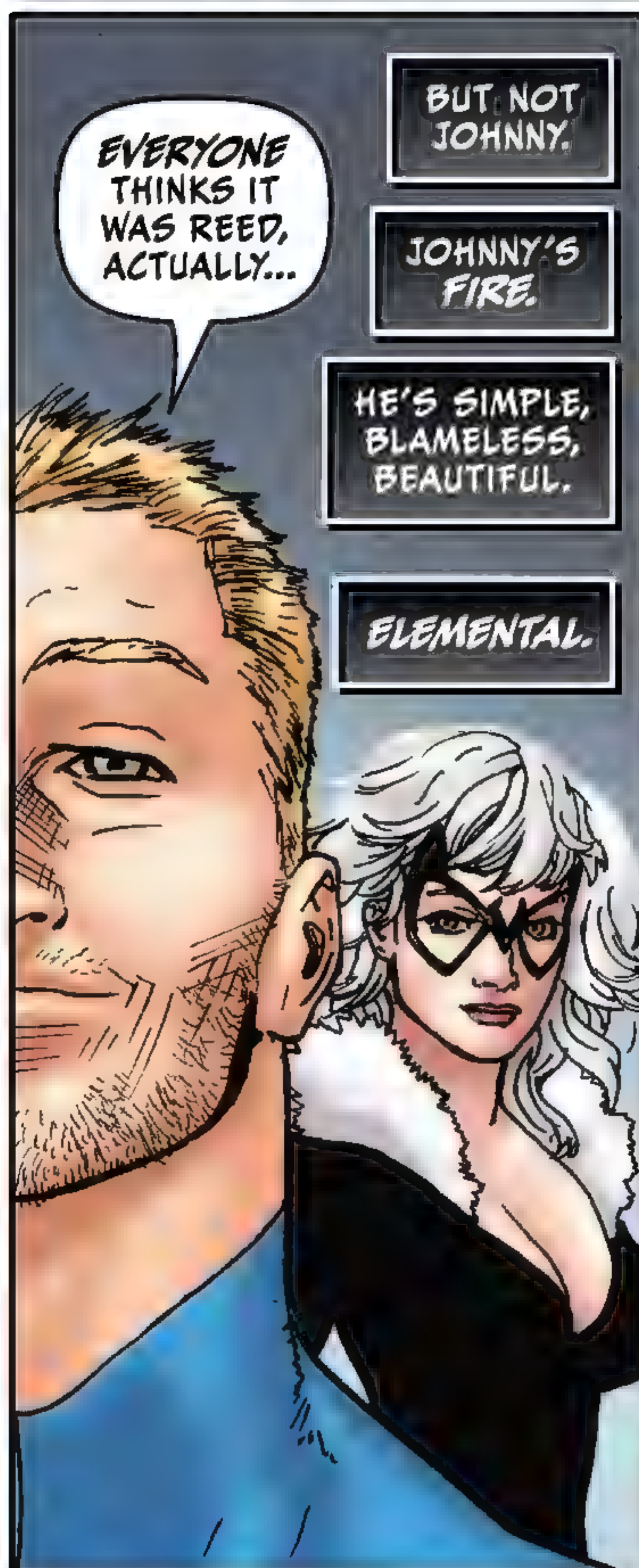
YOU CAN'T
GO THROUGH THE
HANGER AND SKIP THE
FANTASTICAR!

DESIGN,
BUILD,
EVERYTHING--
ALL ME!

LOT
OF PEOPLE
THINK IT WAS
REED.

JOHNNY'S NOT A
REAL COMPLICATED
GUY. WHICH IS HIS
WHOLE APPEAL.

NOW NORMALLY, THE
KIND OF GUY WHO **JUMPS**
WHEN HIS FRIEND'S
EX SLIDES INTO HIS DMS AND SUGGESTS
AN INTIMATE LUNCH, YOU'D THINK,
"YEAH, I GOT THAT DUDE'S NUMBER."



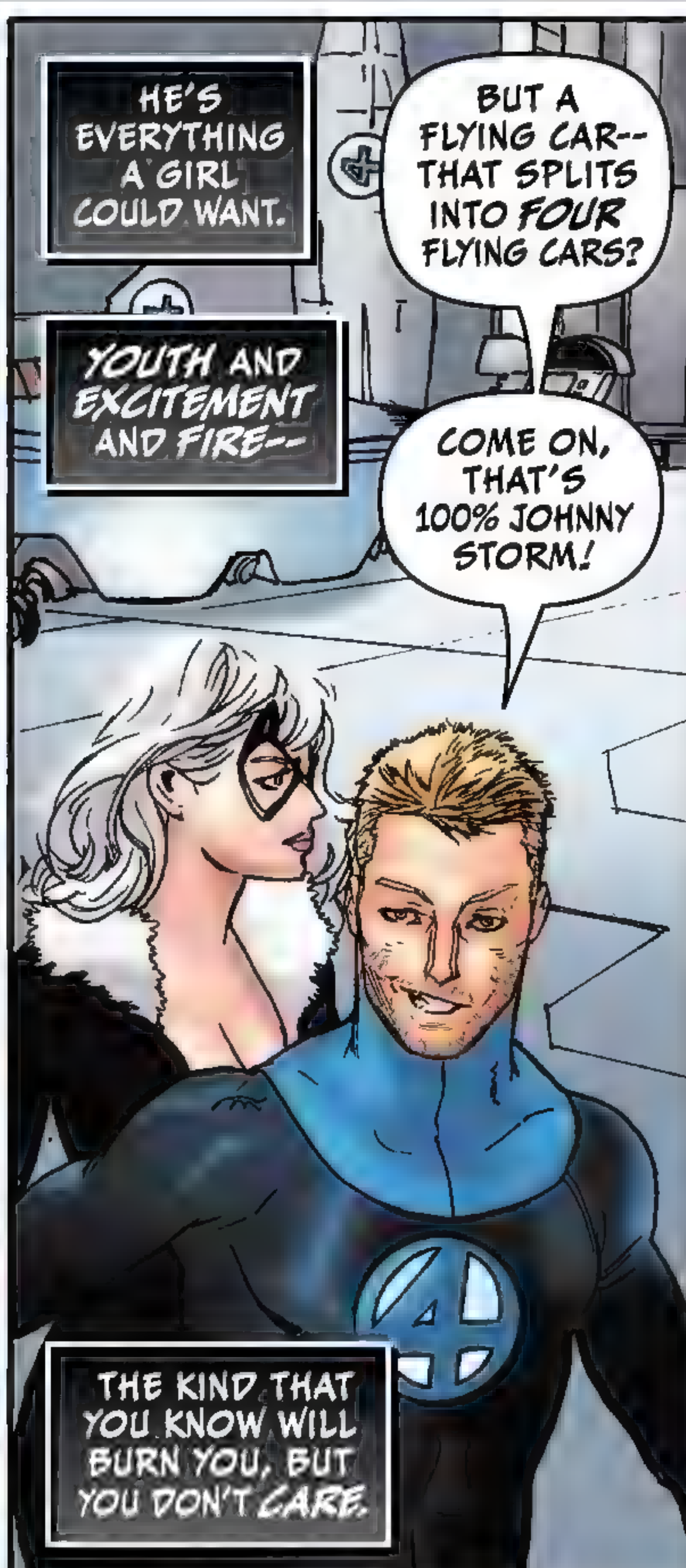
EVERYONE
THINKS IT
WAS REED,
ACTUALLY...

BUT NOT
JOHNNY.

JOHNNY'S
FIRE.

HE'S SIMPLE,
BLAMELESS,
BEAUTIFUL.

ELEMENTAL.



HE'S
EVERYTHING
A GIRL
COULD WANT.

YOUTH AND
EXCITEMENT
AND FIRE--

BUT A
FLYING CAR--
THAT SPLITS
INTO **FOUR**
FLYING CARS?

COME ON,
THAT'S
100% JOHNNY
STORM!

THE KIND THAT
YOU KNOW WILL
BURN YOU, BUT
YOU DON'T CARE.



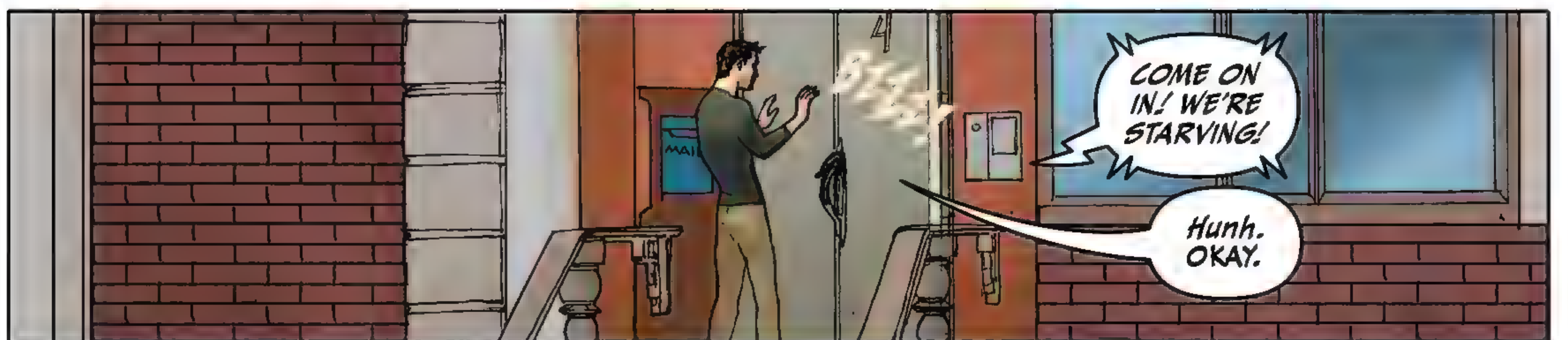
DO YOU AND
THAT THING WANT
TO BE **ALONE?**

NOT
MY TYPE,
REALLY.

BECAUSE
UNLESS
YOU START
PAYING **ME**
SOME OF THAT
ATTENTION,
I'M LEAVING!

HEY,
LET'S
NOT BE
HASTY!

BUT I CAN
SEE IT.





BEEP!

SOMEONE'S AT THE DOOR... MUST BE THE FOOD YOU ORDERED.

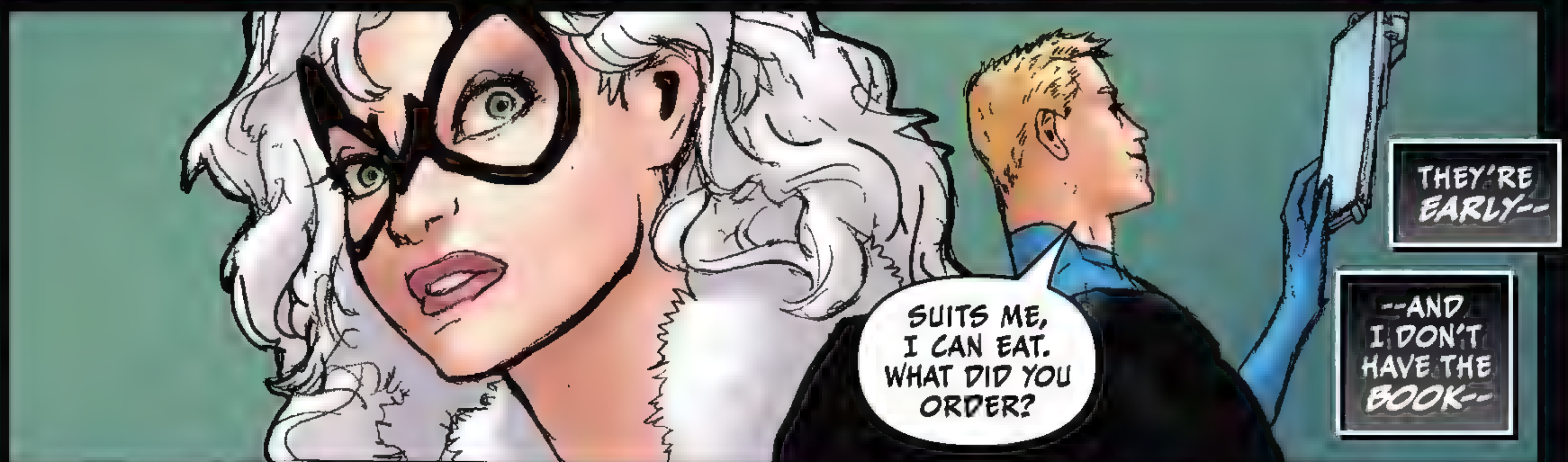
BZZZ!

COME ON IN! WE'RE STARVING!

WHAT?!

THAT'S... EARLY.

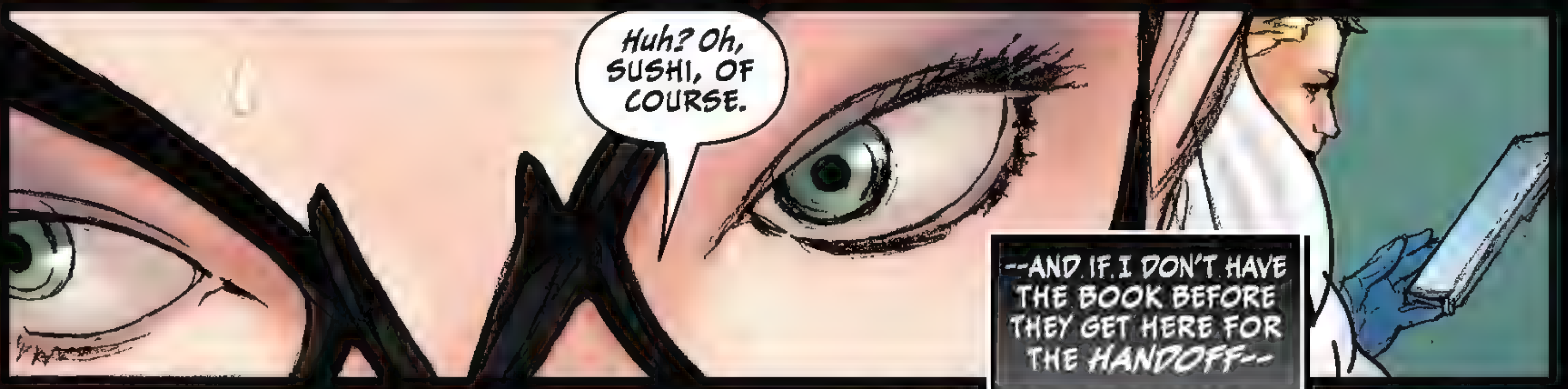
WHY ARE THEY EARLY?



SUITS ME, I CAN EAT. WHAT DID YOU ORDER?

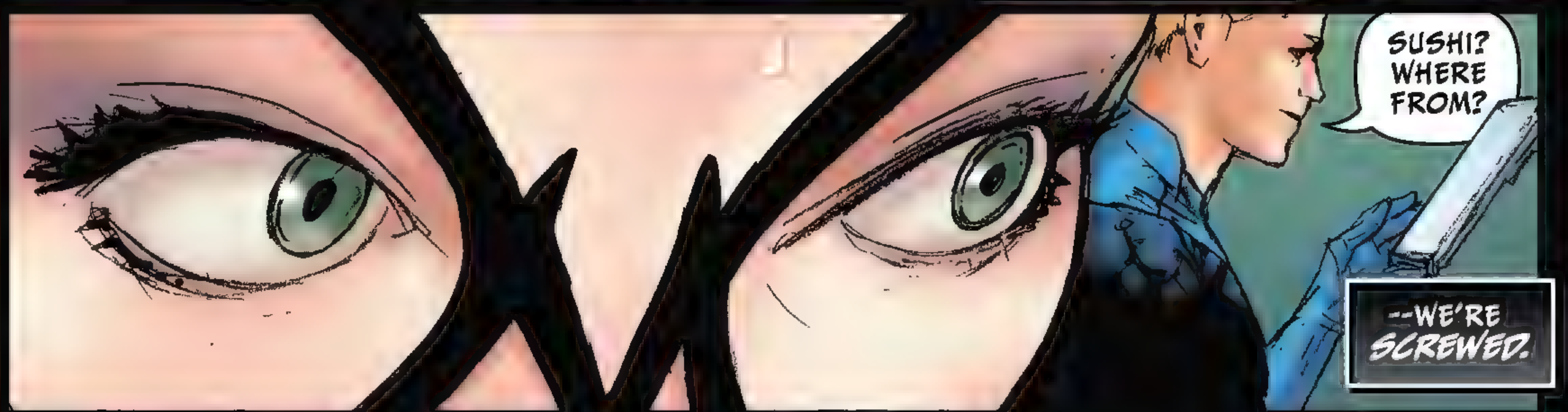
THEY'RE EARLY--

--AND I DON'T HAVE THE BOOK--



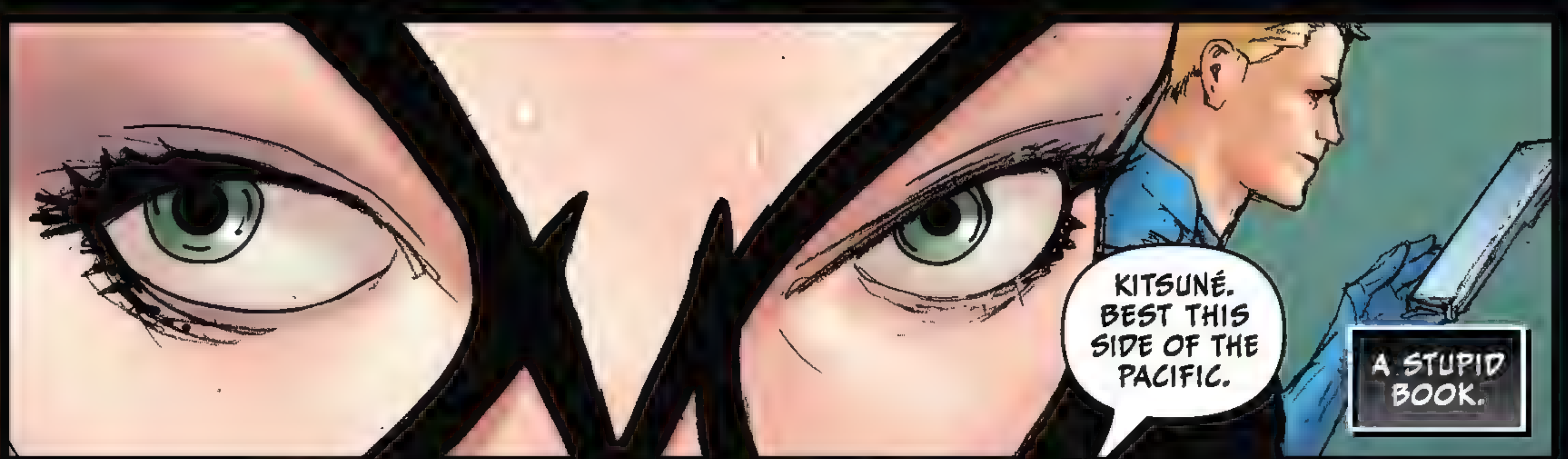
Huh? Oh, SUSHI, OF COURSE.

--AND IF I DON'T HAVE THE BOOK BEFORE THEY GET HERE FOR THE HANDOFF--



SUSHI? WHERE FROM?

--WE'RE SCREWED.



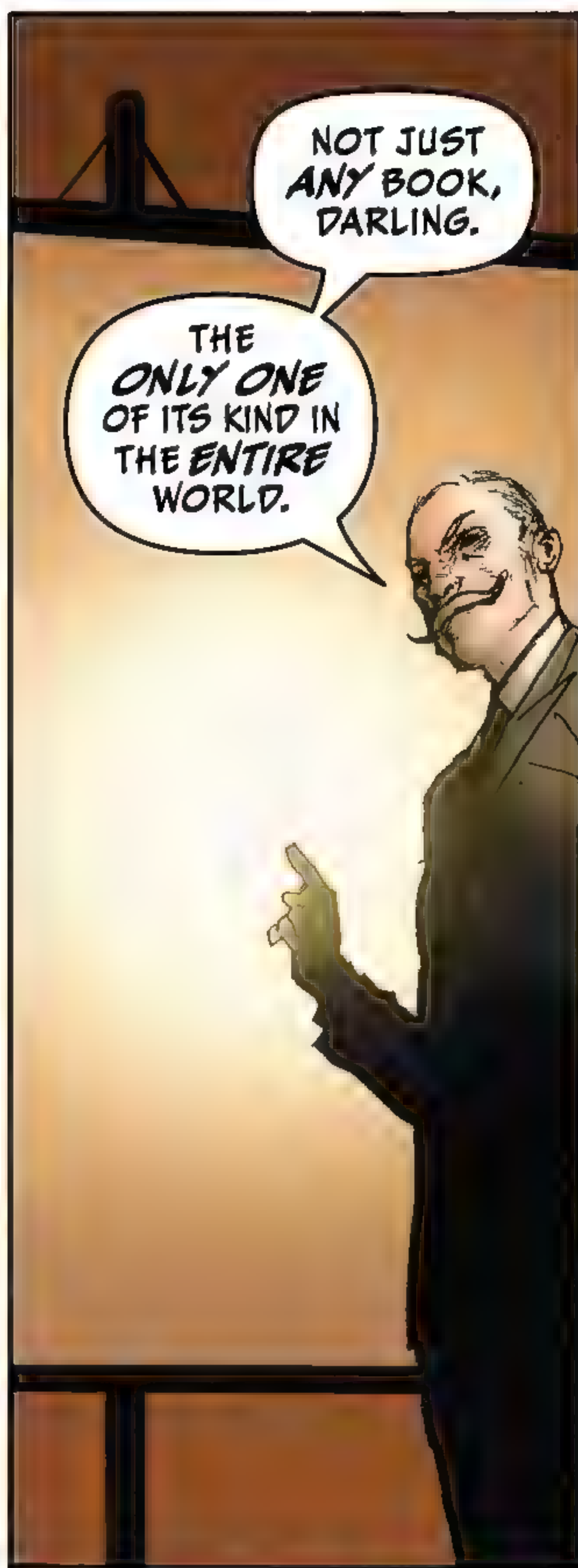
KITSUNÉ. BEST THIS SIDE OF THE PACIFIC.

A STUPID BOOK.



WE'RE
BREAKING INTO REED
RICHARDS' LIBRARY
FOR A BOOK?

NEXT WEEK
DO WE BUST INTO
DR. DOOM'S PAD
AND MAKE OFF WITH
HIS COLLECTIONS
OF SHIPS IN
BOTTLES?



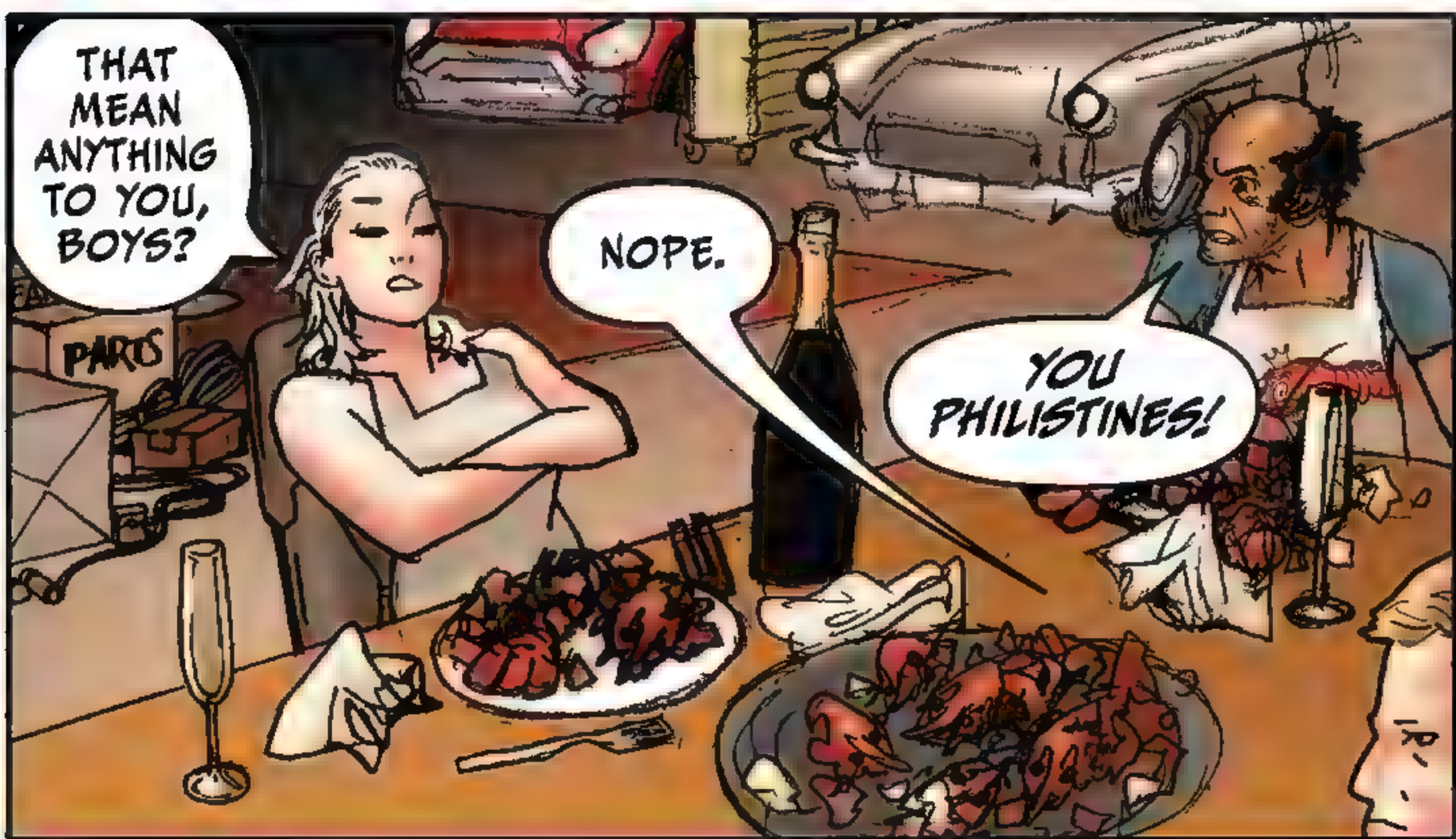
NOT JUST
ANY BOOK,
DARLING.

THE
ONLY ONE
OF ITS KIND IN
THE ENTIRE
WORLD.



A THING OF
WONDER.

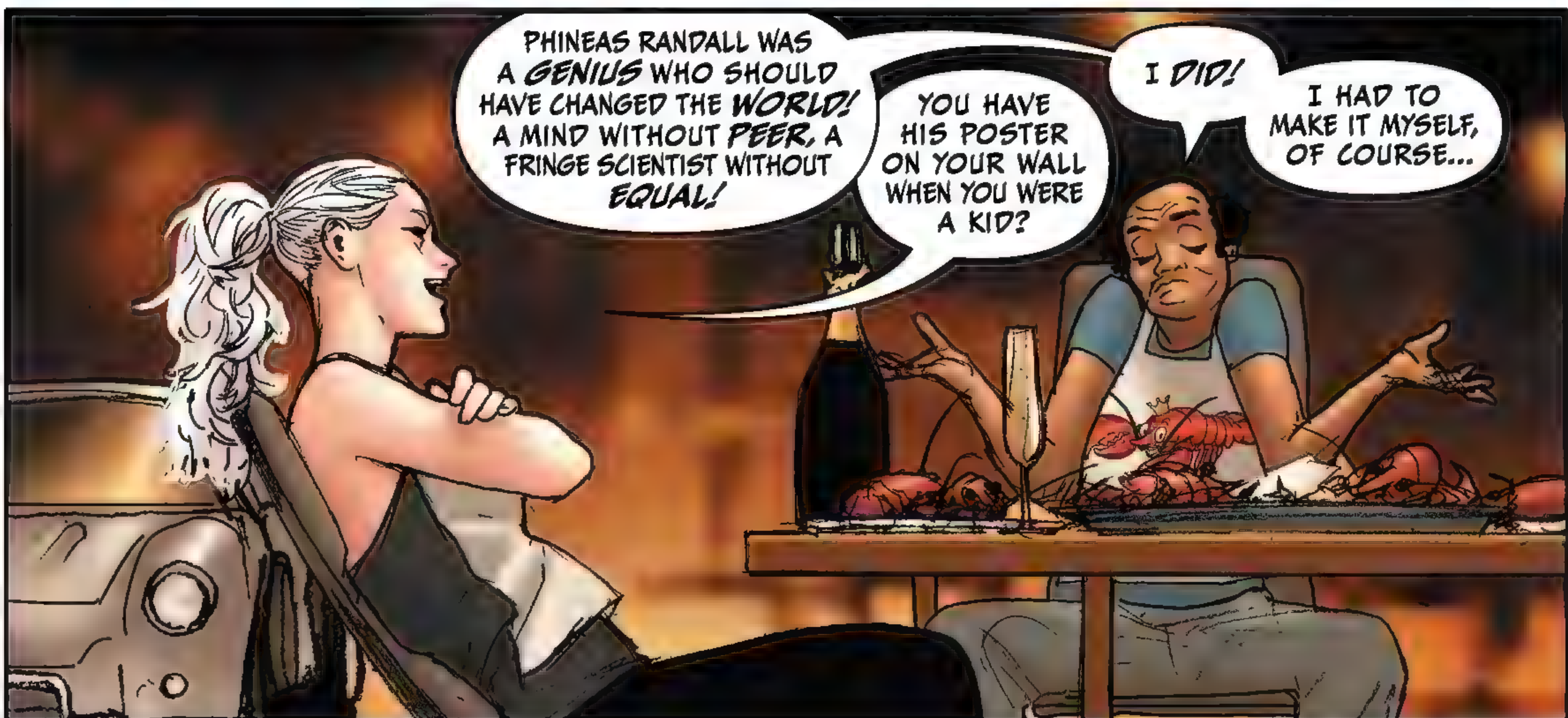
THE
CORNUCOPIA
OF HYPOTHETICAL
SCIENCE.



THAT
MEAN
ANYTHING
TO YOU,
BOYS?

NOPE.

YOU
PHILISTINES!

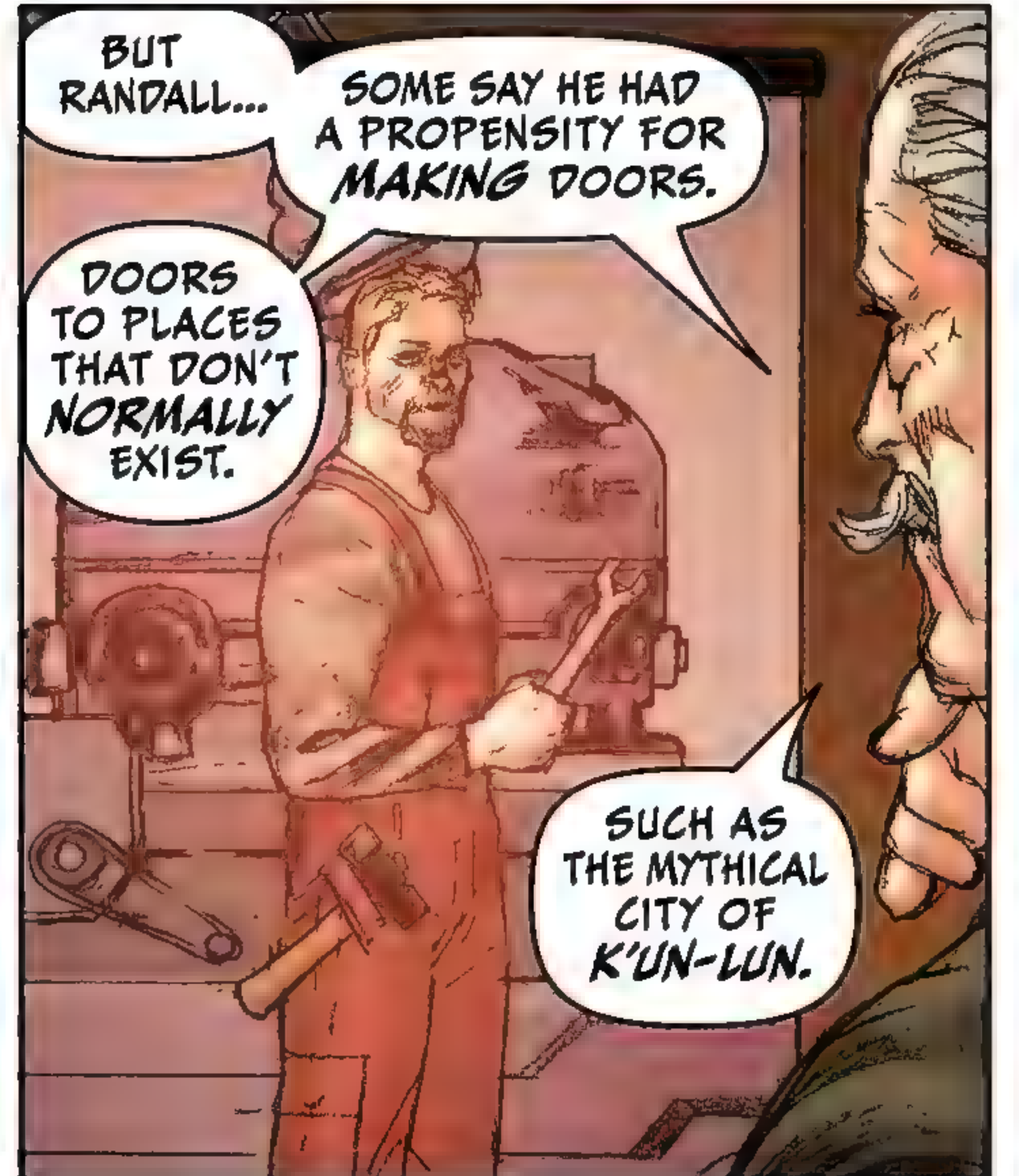
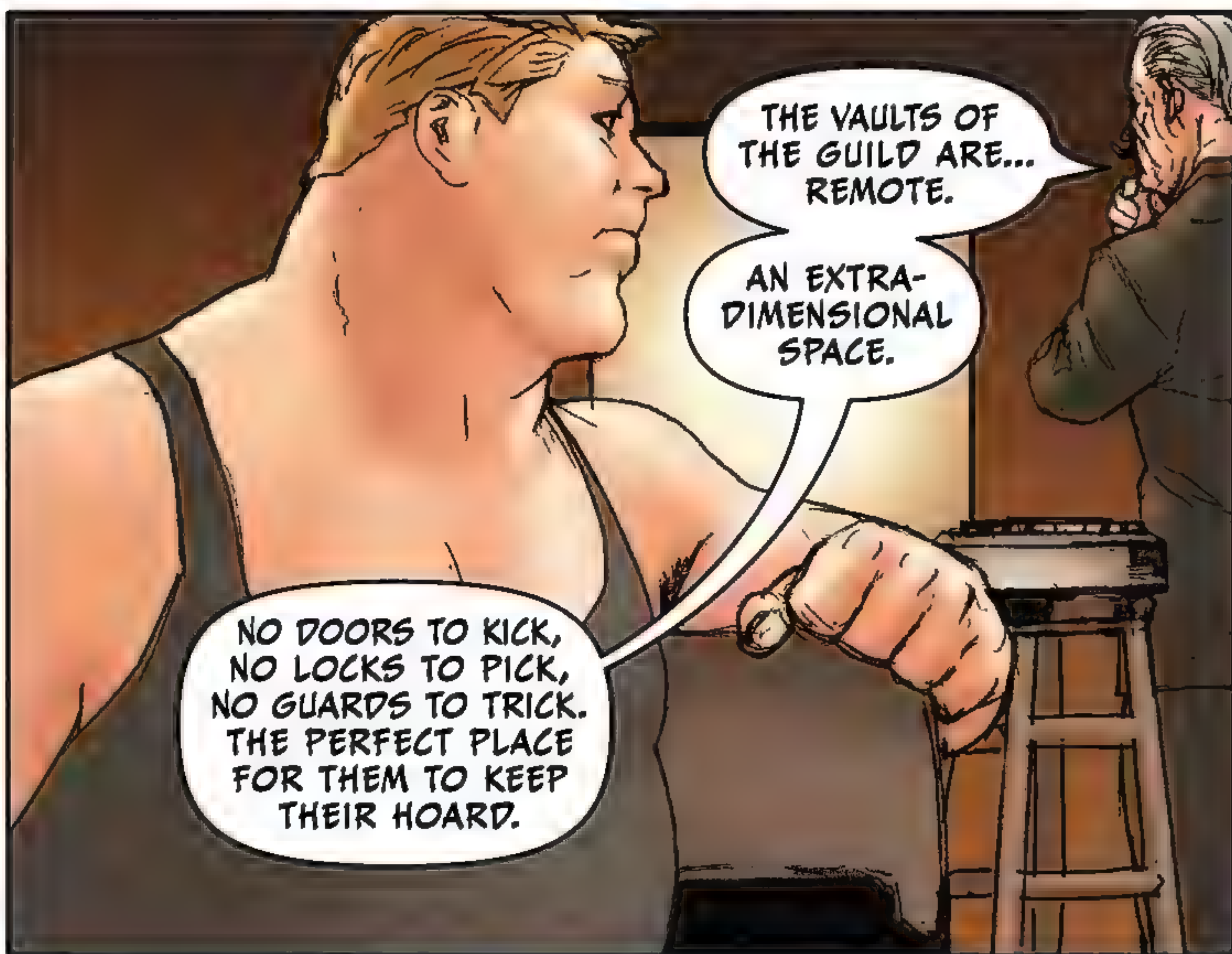
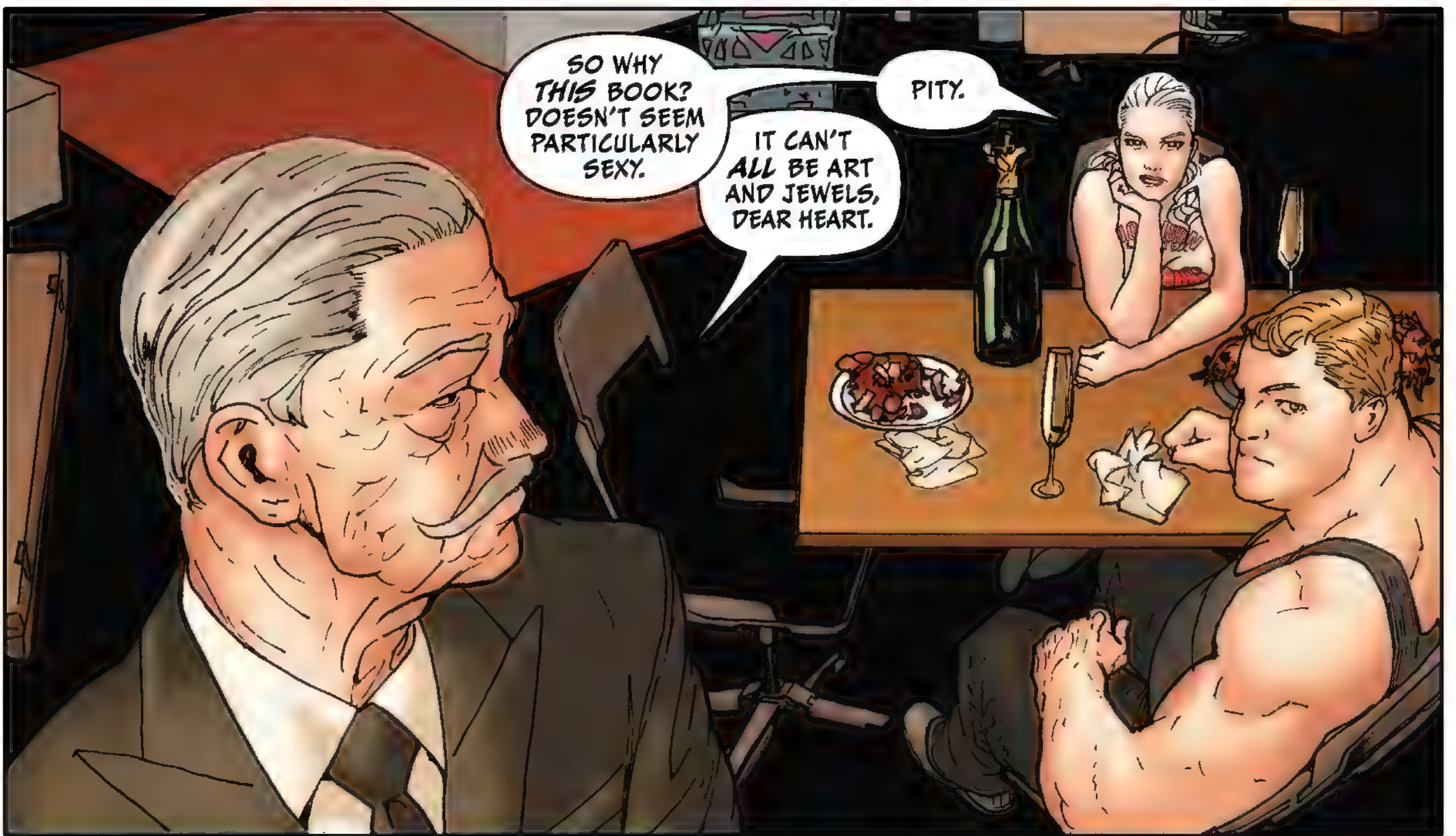


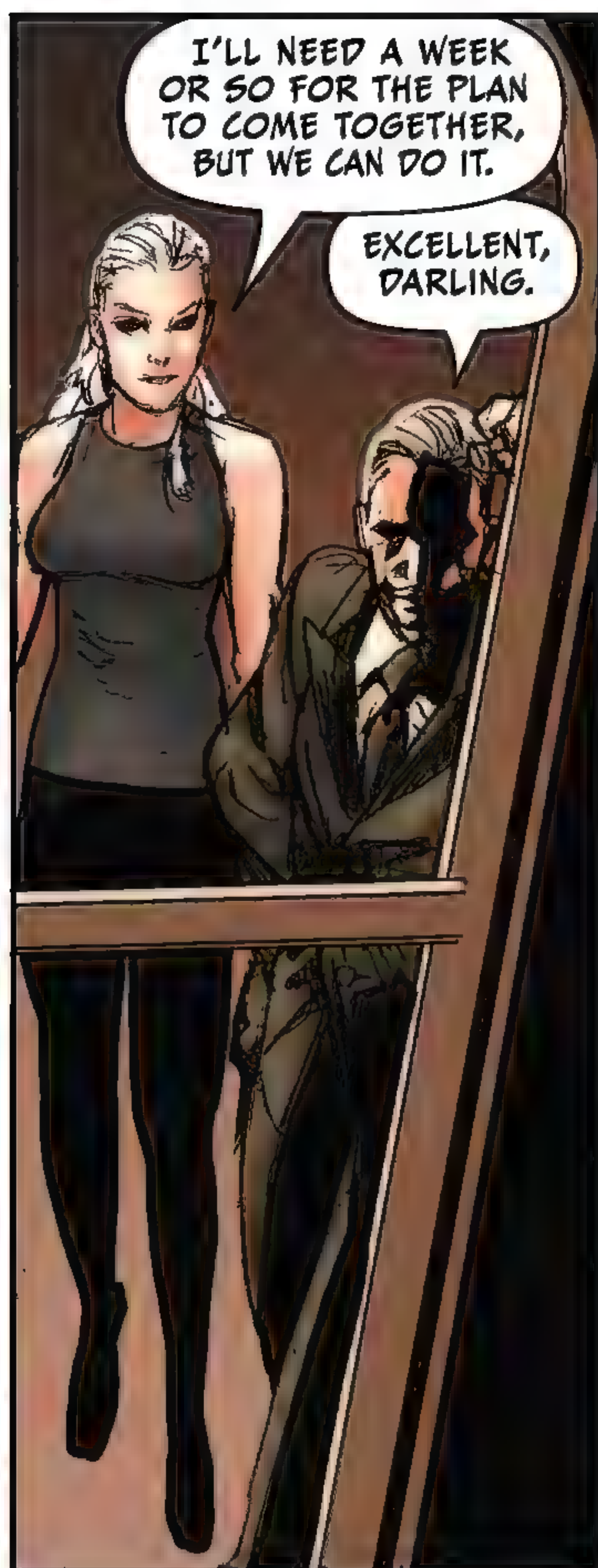
PHINEAS RANDALL WAS
A GENIUS WHO SHOULD
HAVE CHANGED THE WORLD!
A MIND WITHOUT PEER, A
FRINGE SCIENTIST WITHOUT
EQUAL!

YOU HAVE
HIS POSTER
ON YOUR WALL
WHEN YOU WERE
A KID?

I DID!

I HAD TO
MAKE IT MYSELF,
OF COURSE...





I'LL NEED A WEEK OR SO FOR THE PLAN TO COME TOGETHER, BUT WE CAN DO IT.

EXCELLENT, DARLING.



WHAT'S UP, FOXY?

THIS CAPER, ROBBING THE GUILD...

...THIS WILL BE MY RETIREMENT.

WHAT?!



OUR LIFE IS NOT KIND TO THE OLD, DARLING.

MY DAYS OF JUMPING FROM WINDOWS ARE BEHIND ME, AND I HAVEN'T THE TEMPERAMENT FOR A MANAGEMENT ROLE.

NO, ONE LEGENDARY SCORE IS ALL I HAVE LEFT IN ME.



FOX, YOU'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT GETTING OLD SINCE I MET YOU.

IT'S THE ONE ENEMY I CANNOT CHEAT.

COME ON, TELL ME ABOUT DRACULA AGAIN, THAT ALWAYS CHEERS YOU UP.

DID YOU EVER RUN INTO HIM AGAIN?



YES.

"ONCE."

GOT IT.

Whew.

AAAAOOGA

AAH!

Oh

DEAR LORD.

IS RICHARDS SUCH A NERD THAT HE WIRED HIS DAMN BOOKSHELF?

WHOOP

WHAT THE--?!

LAB ALARM!

Whew.

AAAAOOGA

NOW THIS IS A DATE!

YOU'RE GETTING THE REAL F4 EXPERIENCE!

WAIT, ARE WE RUNNING TOWARD THE DANGER?

WHERE ELSE? COME ON!



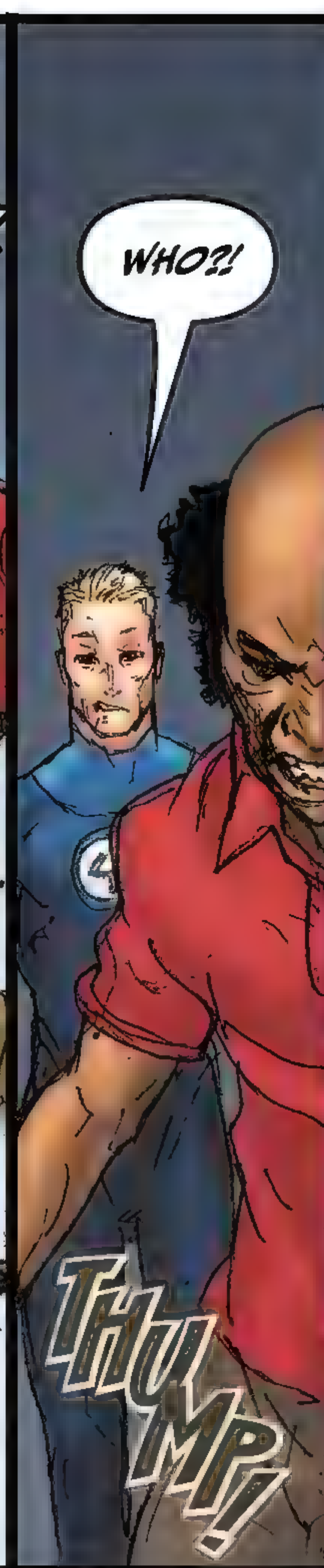
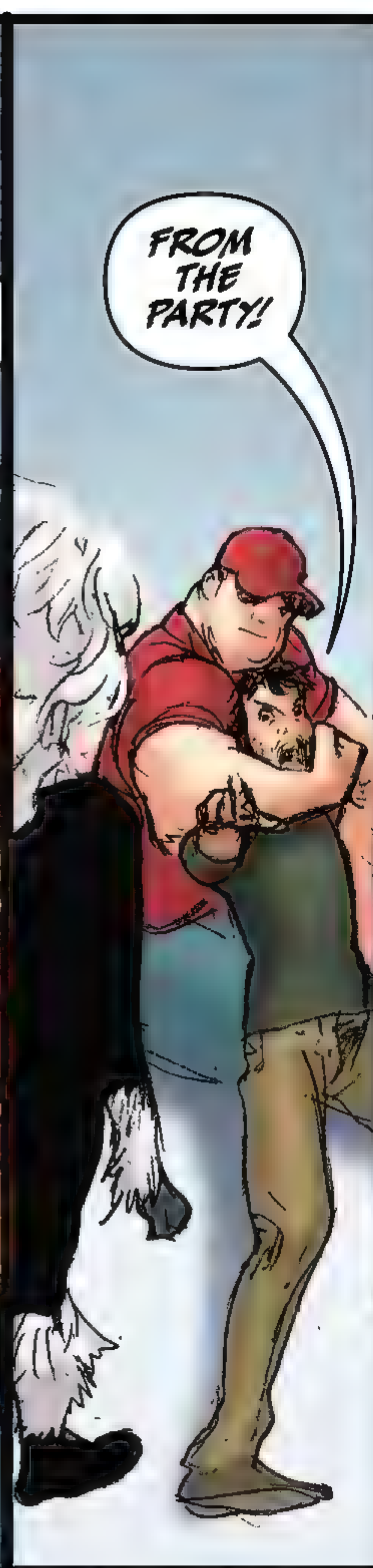
DATES WITH SUPER HEROES. IT'S BEEN A WHILE.

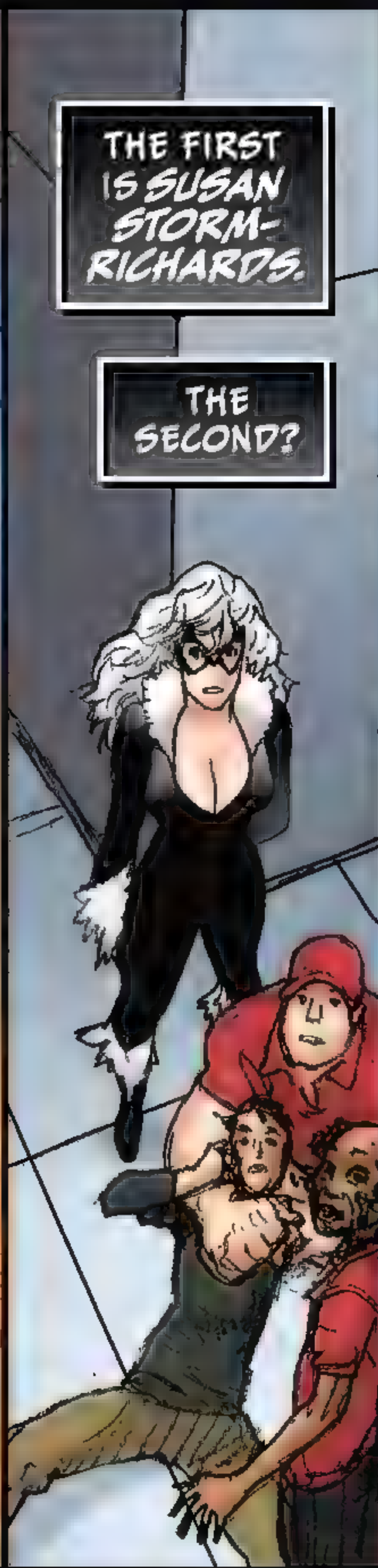
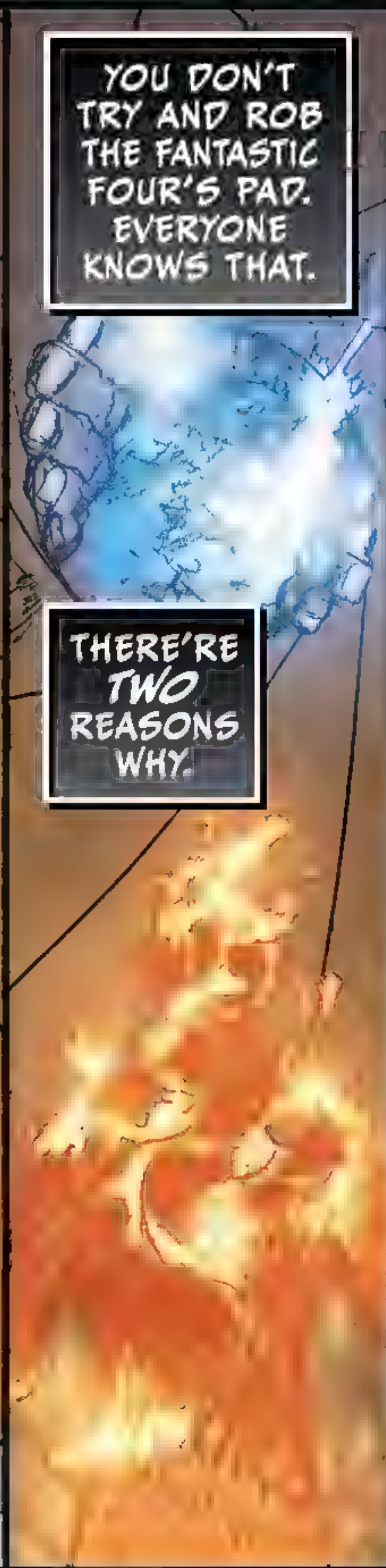
I FORGET THAT THEY'RE ALWAYS RUNNING HEADLONG INTO TERRIFYING SITUATIONS.

I LIVE FOR A THRILL, BUT REALLY.

CAN'T COMPLAIN ABOUT THE SCENERY, THOUGH.







--FOR THE FANTASTIC
FOUR, CRAZINESS
MAKES HOUSE CALLS.

TREMBLE, TINY
CREATURES!

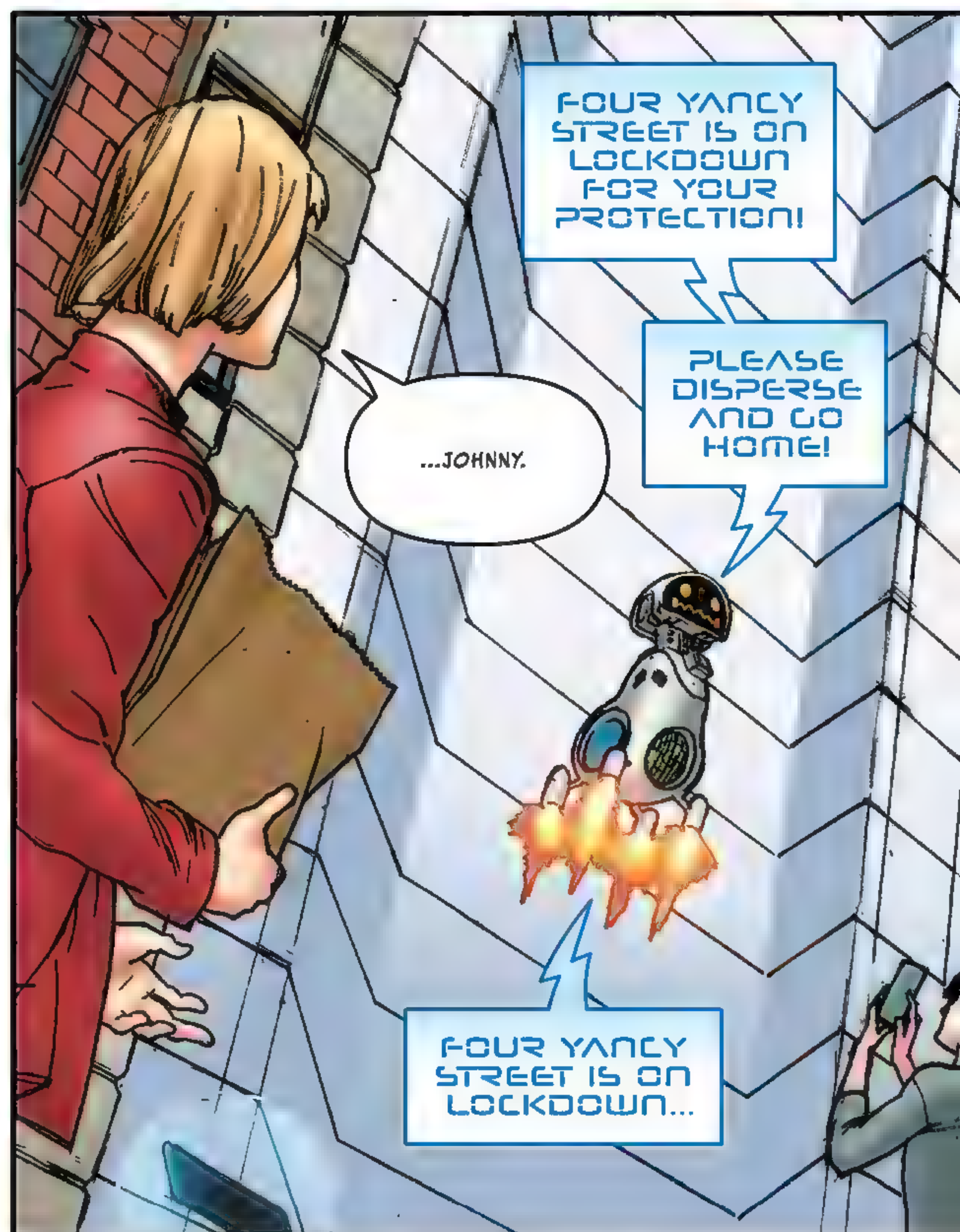
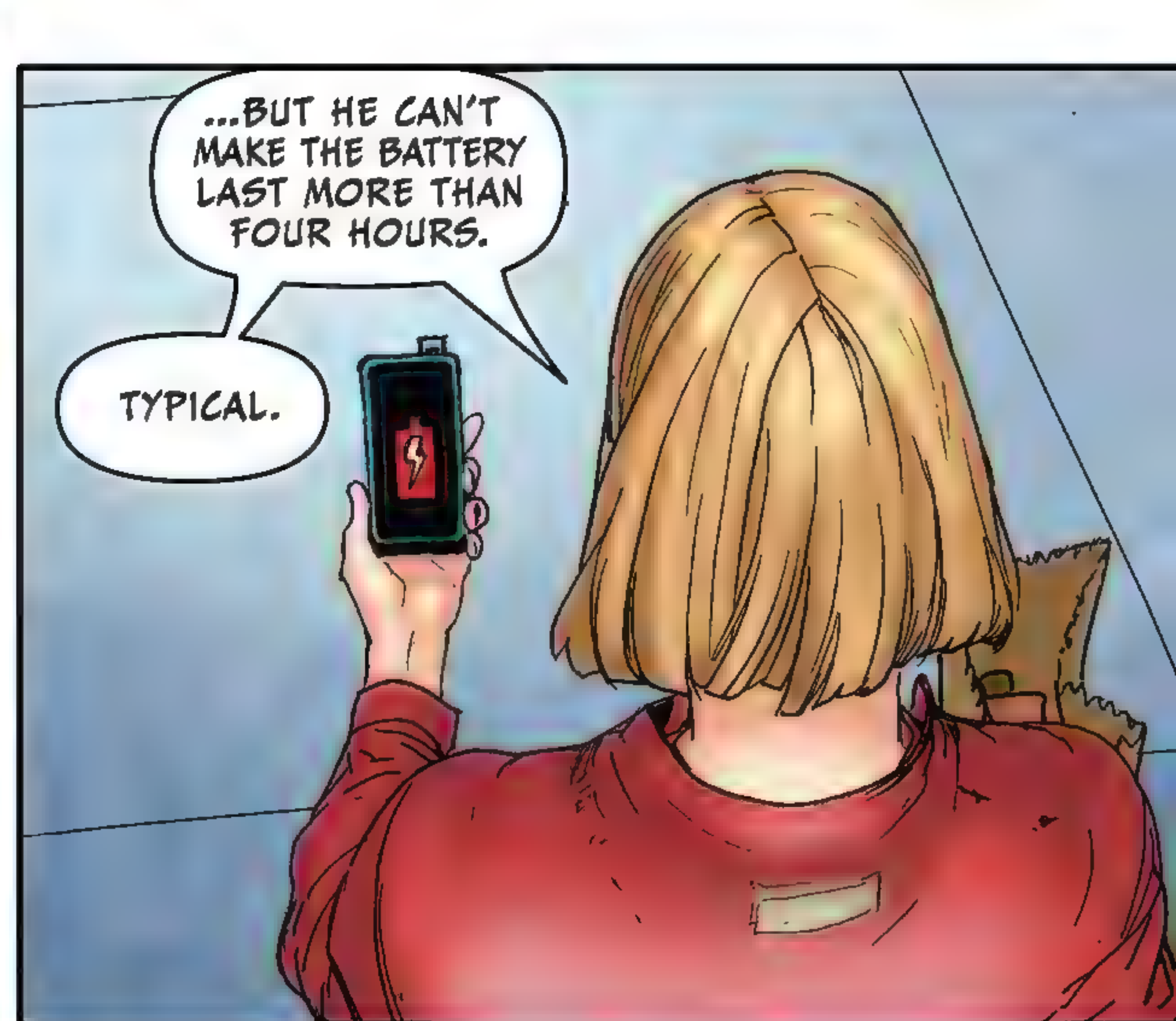
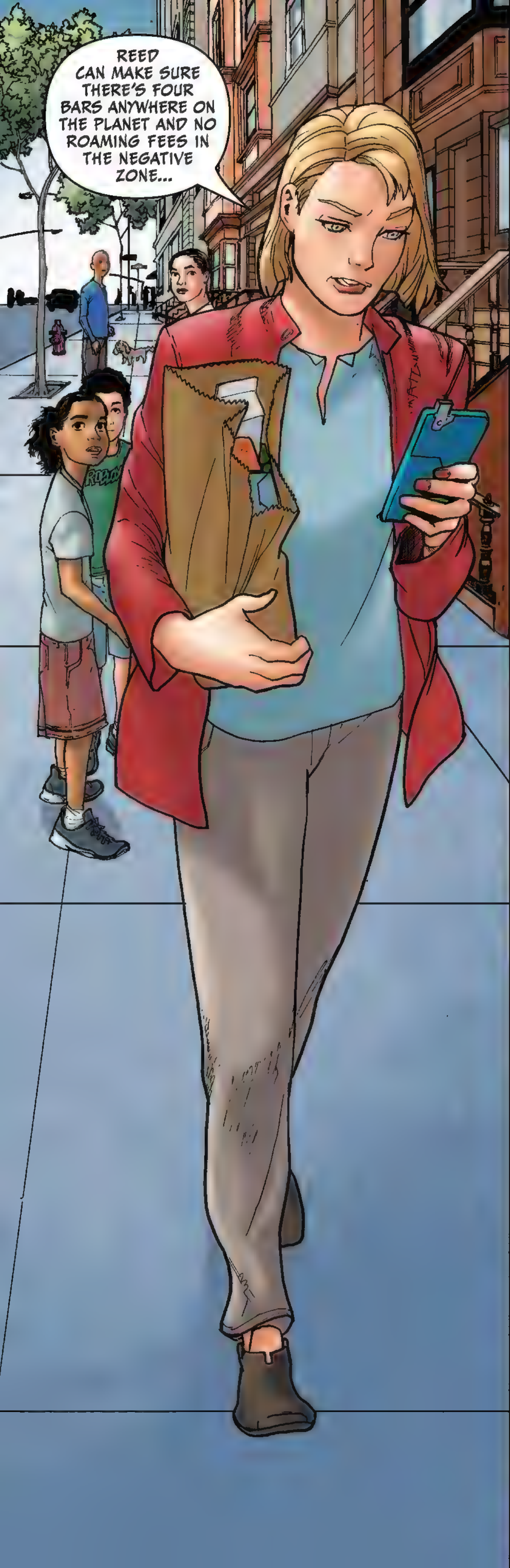
FOR AMONG
YOU STRIDES
THE TYRANT OF
BALUUR!

BLASTAAR!

WELL,
THAT'S JUST
GREAT.









THINGS I
EXPECTED
TODAY:

STEAL
A BOOK.

EAT SOME
SUSHI.

BTWOOM!

MAYBE SOME MAKEOUTS, MAYBE
MORE, SEE HOW I'M FEELING.

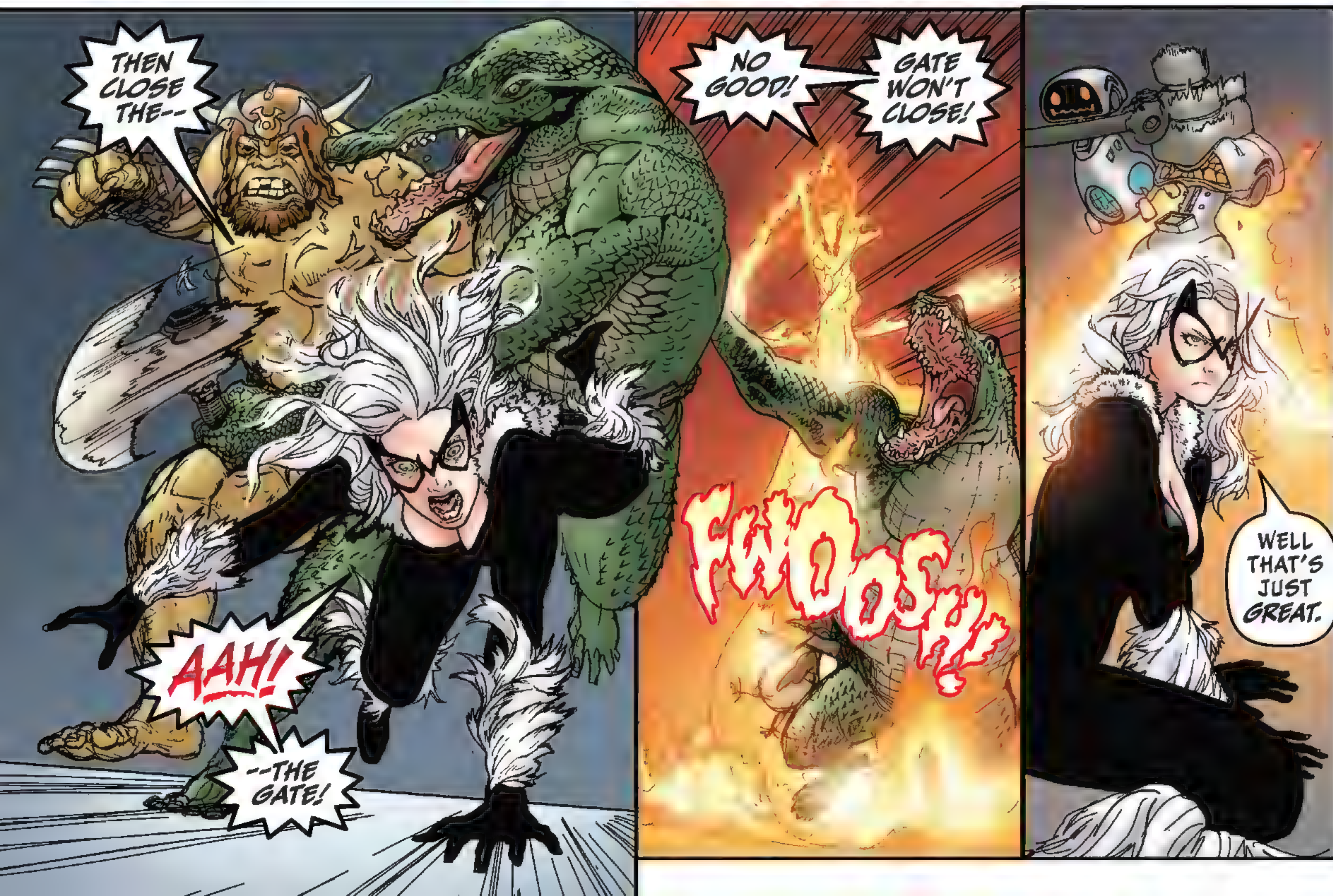
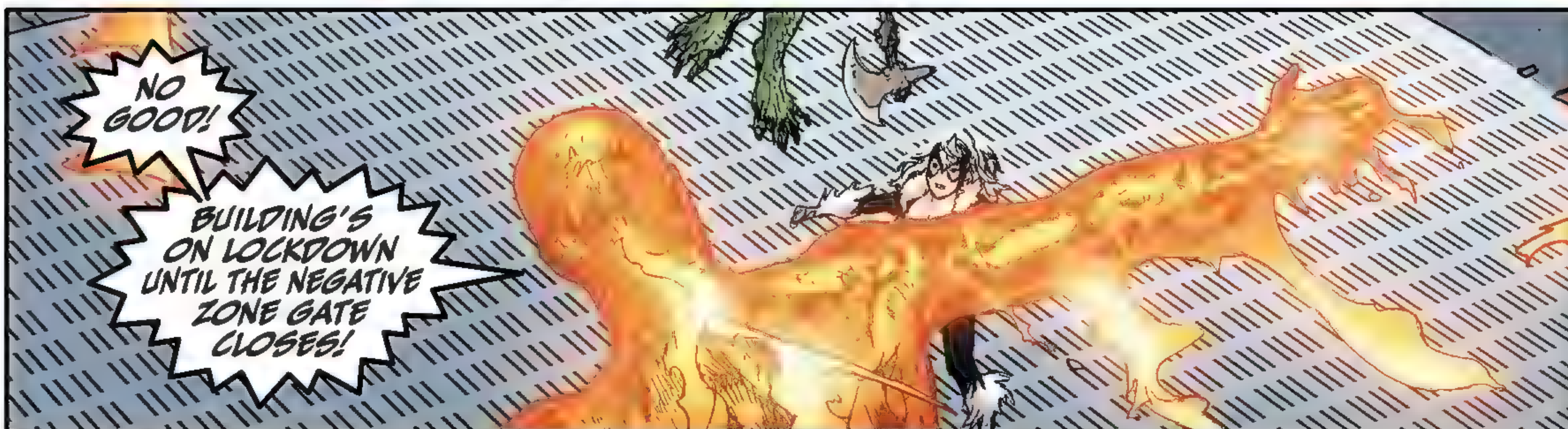
THINGS I DID NOT
EXPECT TODAY (THOUGH
I REALLY SHOULD'VE):

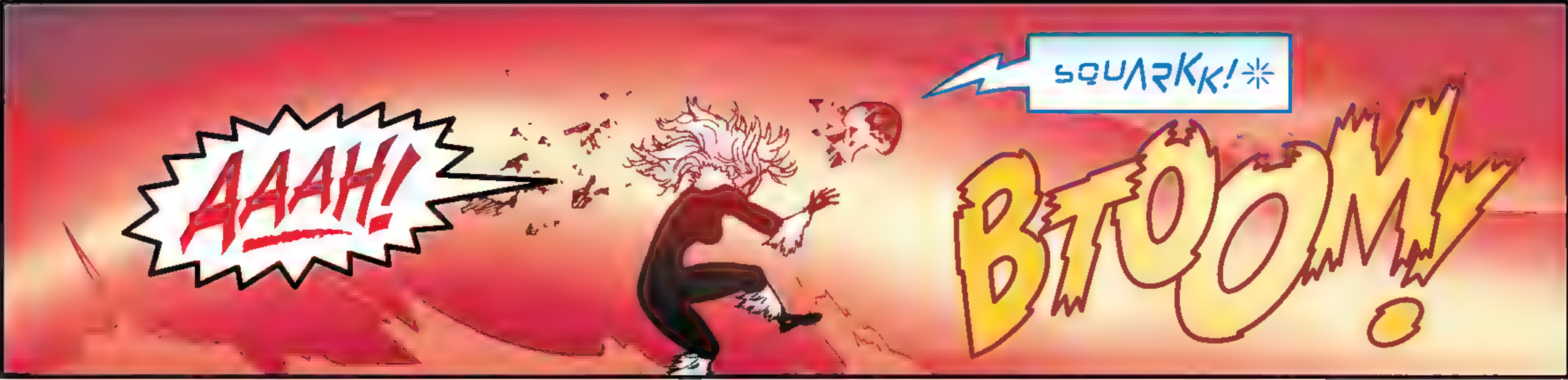
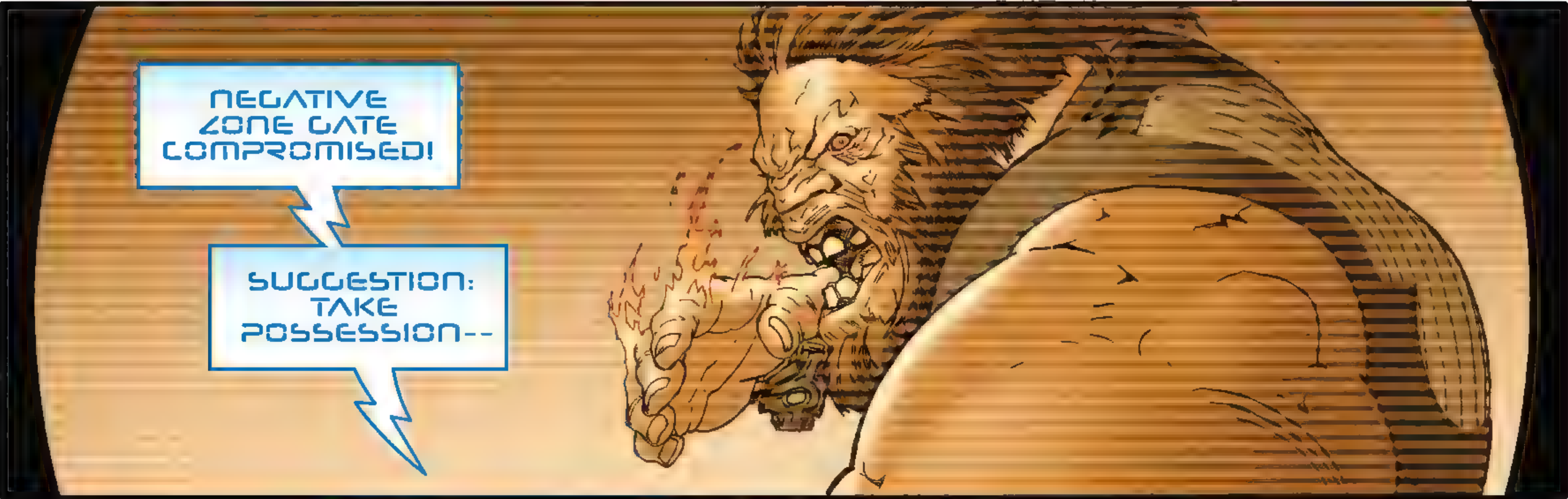
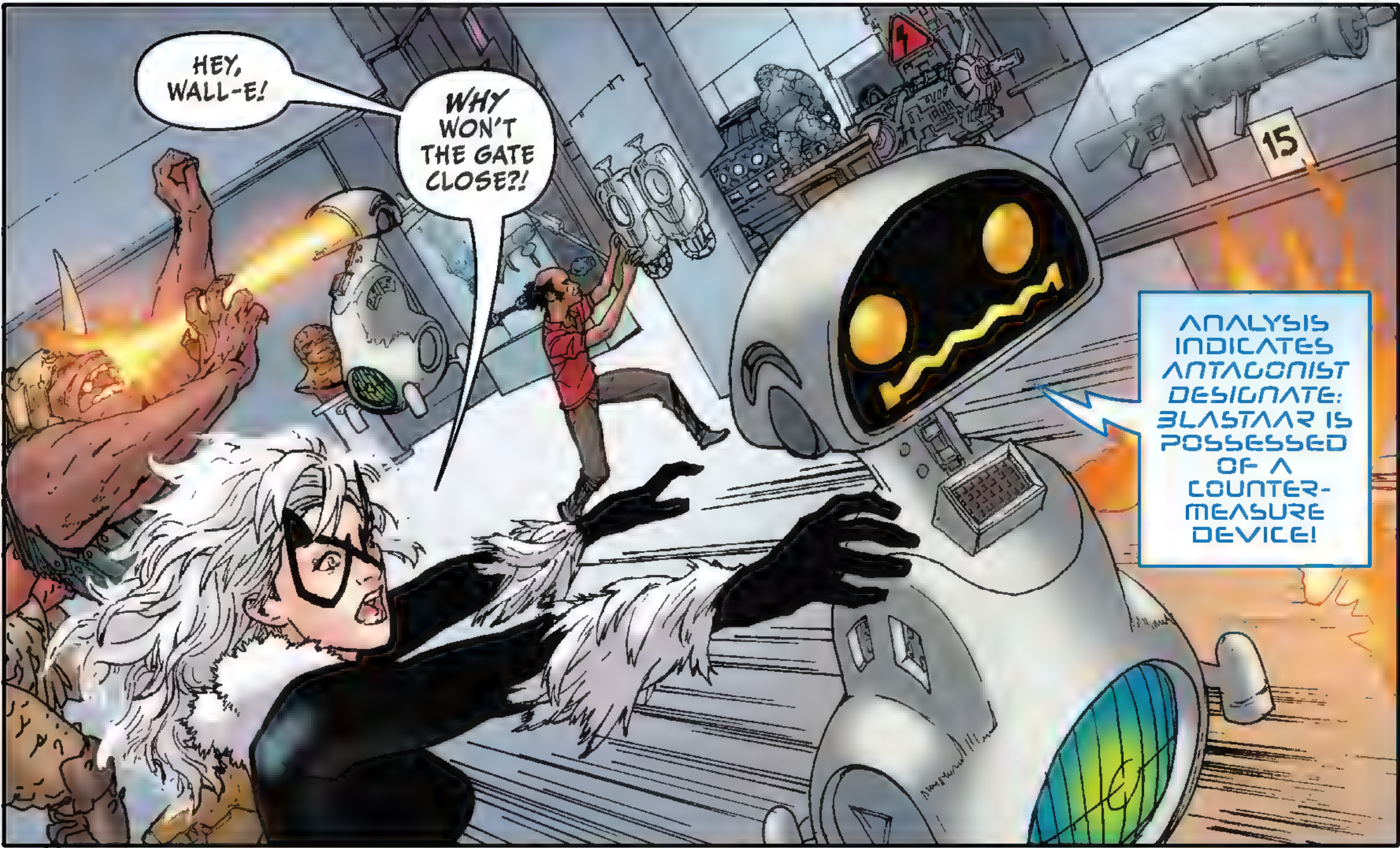


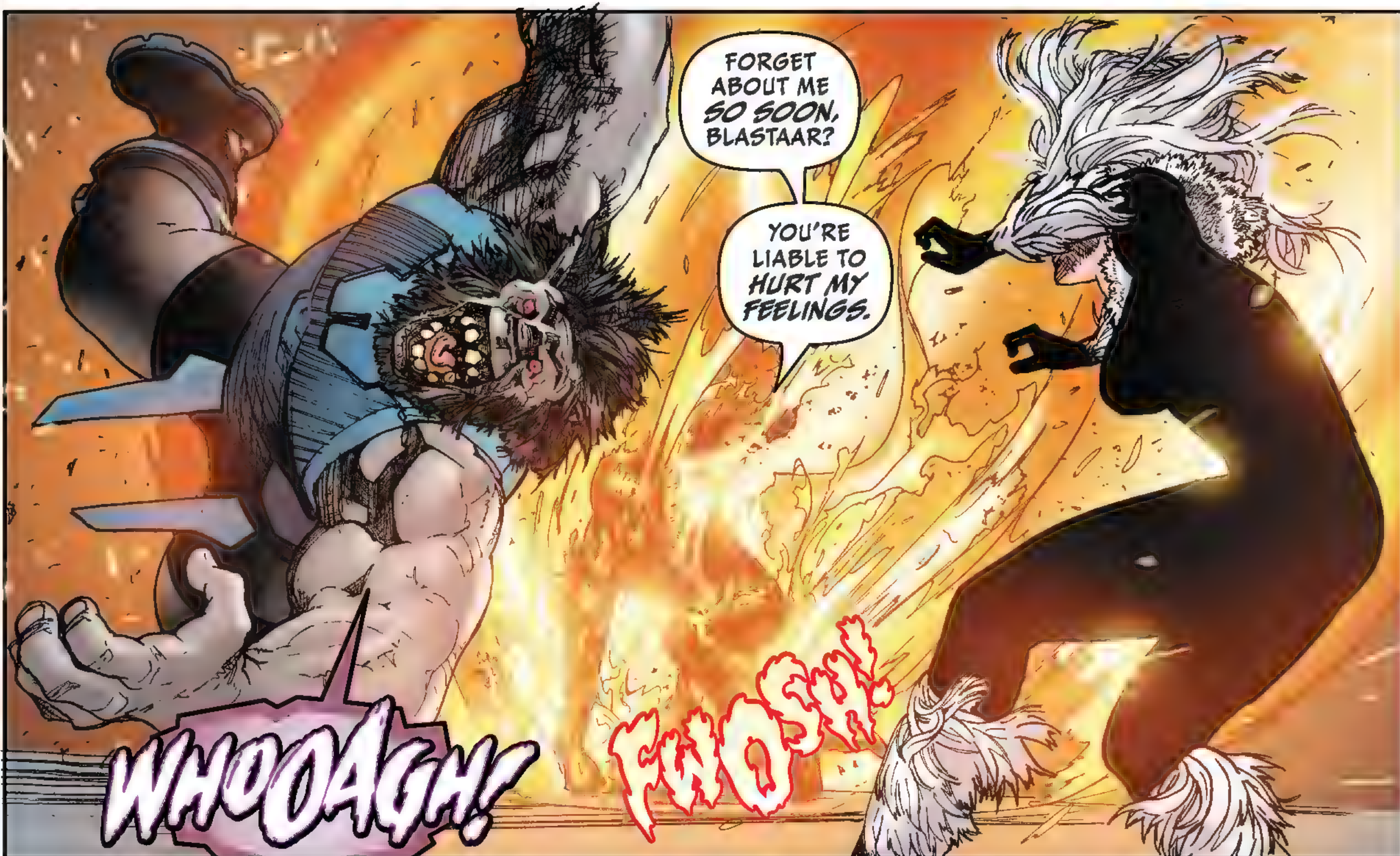
RAAARGH!

AN EVIL
SPACE
MUPPET.

BTWOOM!







FORGET ABOUT ME SO SOON, BLASTAAR?

YOU'RE LIABLE TO HURT MY FEELINGS.

WHOOAGH!

POOF!



IT'S UP TO US TO HANDLE THIS, BOYS.

CONGRATULATIONS, WE'RE--

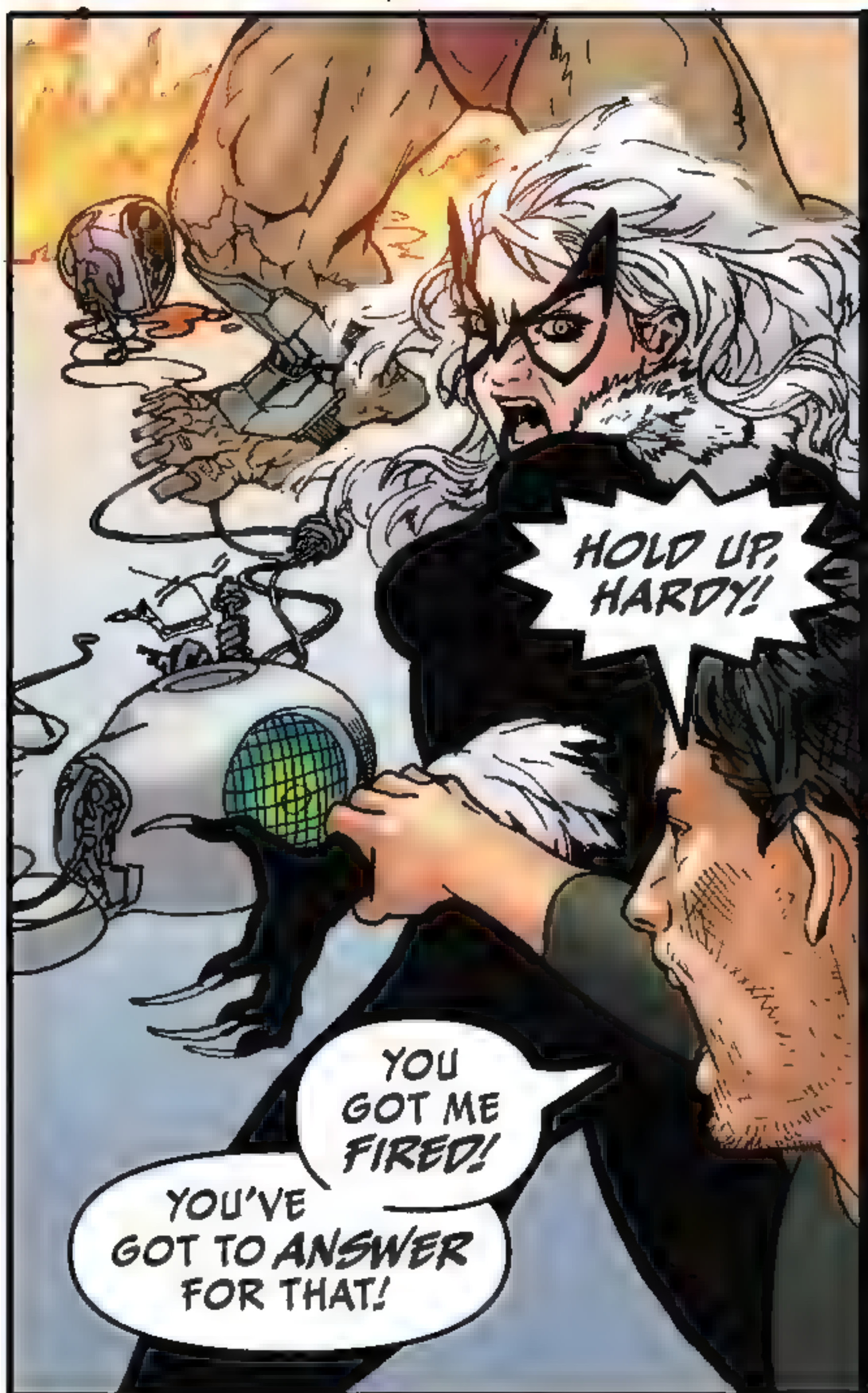
--ugh--

--SUPER HEROES.

ugh.

ugh.

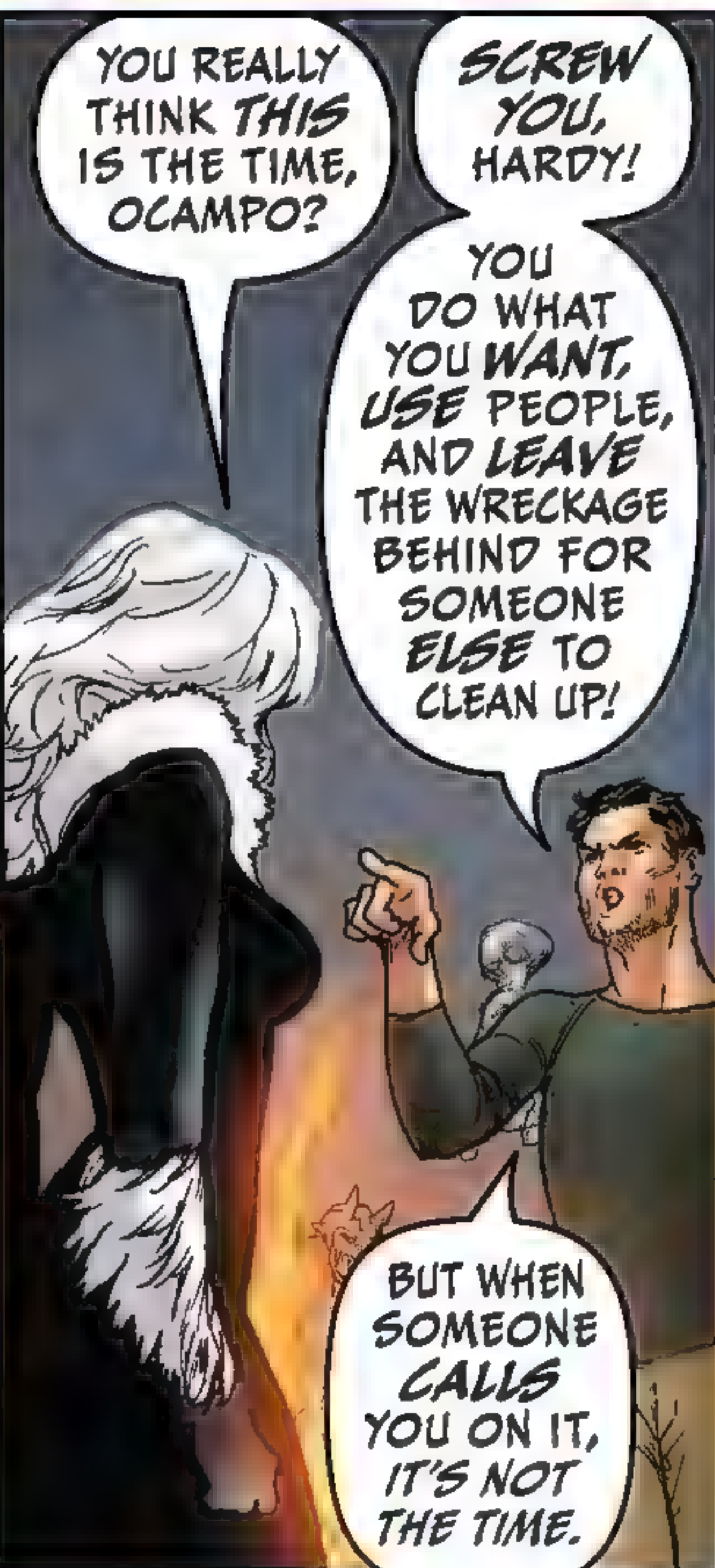
DINNER DROP



HOLD UP, HARDY!

YOU GOT ME FIRED!

YOU'VE GOT TO ANSWER FOR THAT!



YOU REALLY THINK THIS IS THE TIME, OCAMPO?

SCREW YOU, HARDY!

YOU DO WHAT YOU WANT, USE PEOPLE, AND LEAVE THE WRECKAGE BEHIND FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO CLEAN UP!

BUT WHEN SOMEONE CALLS YOU ON IT, IT'S NOT THE TIME.



OR ARE YOU REALLY GOING TO TELL ME THAT YOU'RE JUST HERE FOR LUNCH?

THINGS I DID NOT EXPECT TODAY (THOUGH I REALLY SHOULD'VE):

SUDDEN AND UNWELCOME SELF-REFLECTION.



FINE.
I'M TERRIBLE.
YOU WANT TO TRY
AND BRING ME
TO JUSTICE? DO
IT AFTER.

BUT I NEED
ANOTHER SET OF
HANDS TO GET RID OF
SATAN CHEWBACCA
OVER THERE.

SO ARE
YOU IN THE
CREW OR
NOT?



YOU'RE
WELCOME TO
TRY.

FINE.
TRUCE. BUT
AFTER...



THE
FOOL OF
FLAME...

...EXTINGUISHED.

NOW,
FOR THE
SPOILS...

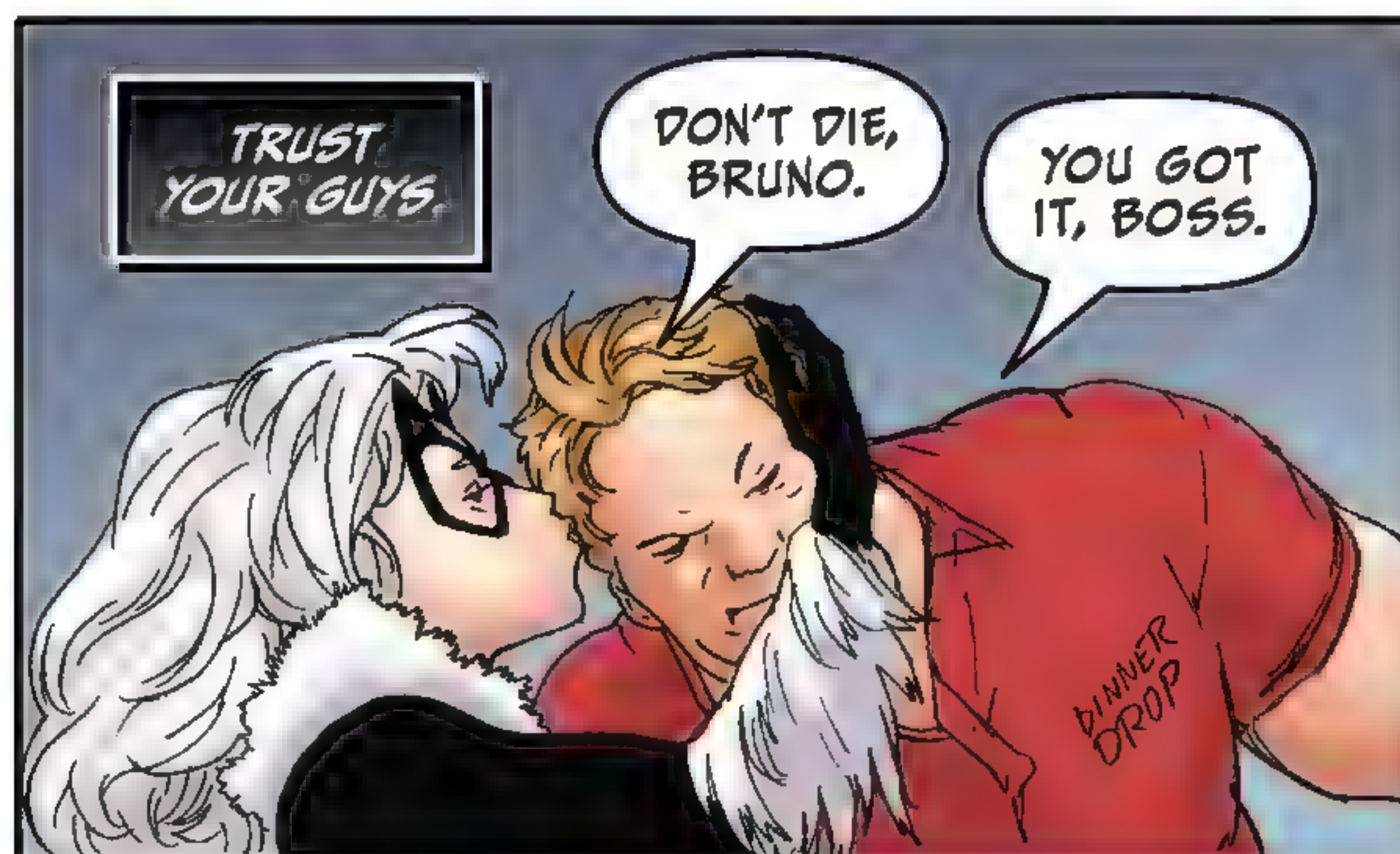


NUTS. WE
NEED MORE
TIME.

I'LL DO IT.
THAT GUY NEEDS
A TUNING.

NO WAY,
THAT'S---

DON'T FORGET
RULE #1 OF
RUNNING A CREW:



TRUST
YOUR GUYS.

DON'T DIE,
BRUNO.

YOU GOT
IT, BOSS.



HAHAHAHA!

RUN
ALL YOU
LIKE, LITTLE
PRIZE!

BRUNO'S A
PROFESSIONAL.

HE'S A TOUGH NUT.
REMEMBER THAT.
THINK ABOUT THAT.



TO
HANGARS

DON'T THINK
ABOUT HOW YOU
KNOW HE'D DIE
TO SAVE YOU.

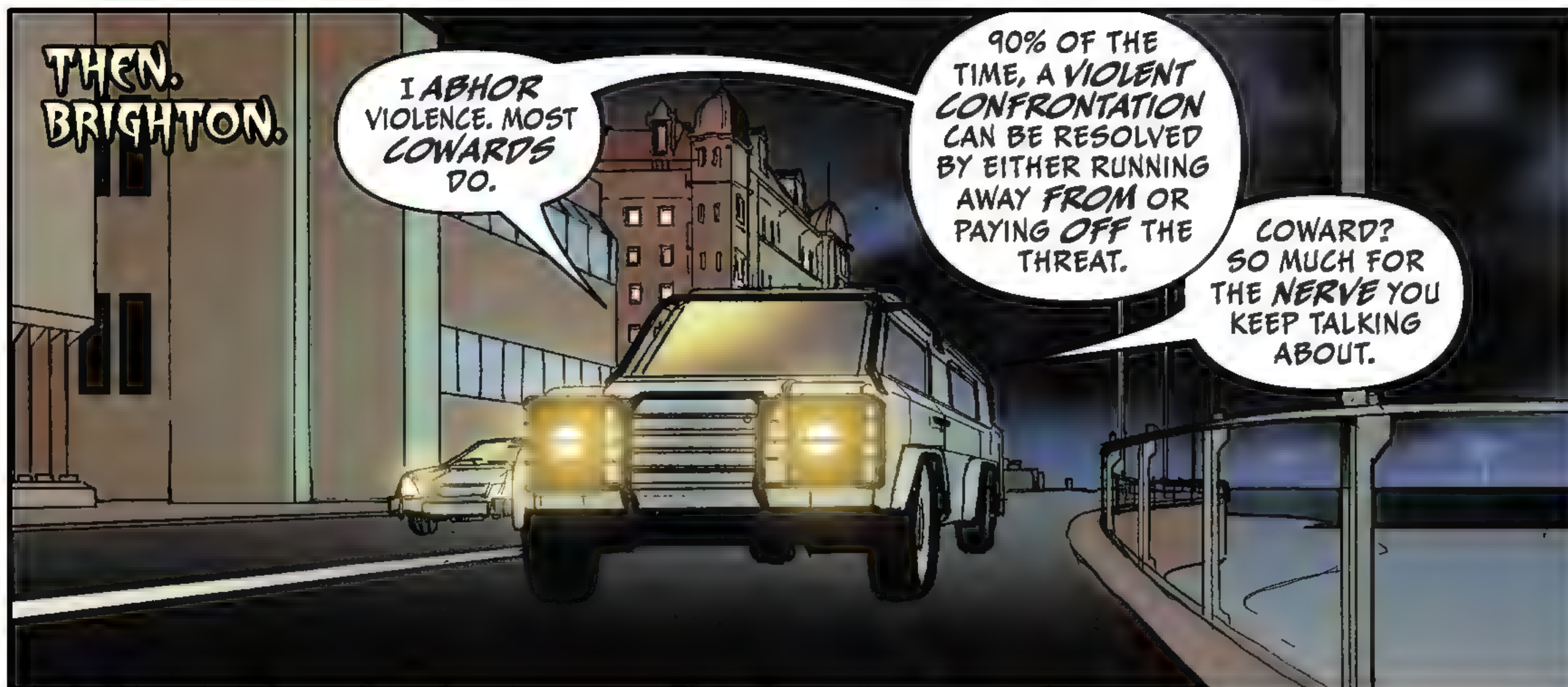
DON'T THINK
ABOUT HOW
YOU'LL FEEL IF
THAT HAPPENS.

**HEY!
FUZZY!**

YOU WANT
TO RODEO,
JABRONI?

LET'S
RODEO!

FOCUS ON THE
PLAN. FOCUS ON
YOUR TRAINING.



**THEN.
BRIGHTON.**

I ABHOR
VIOLENCE. MOST
COWARDS
DO.

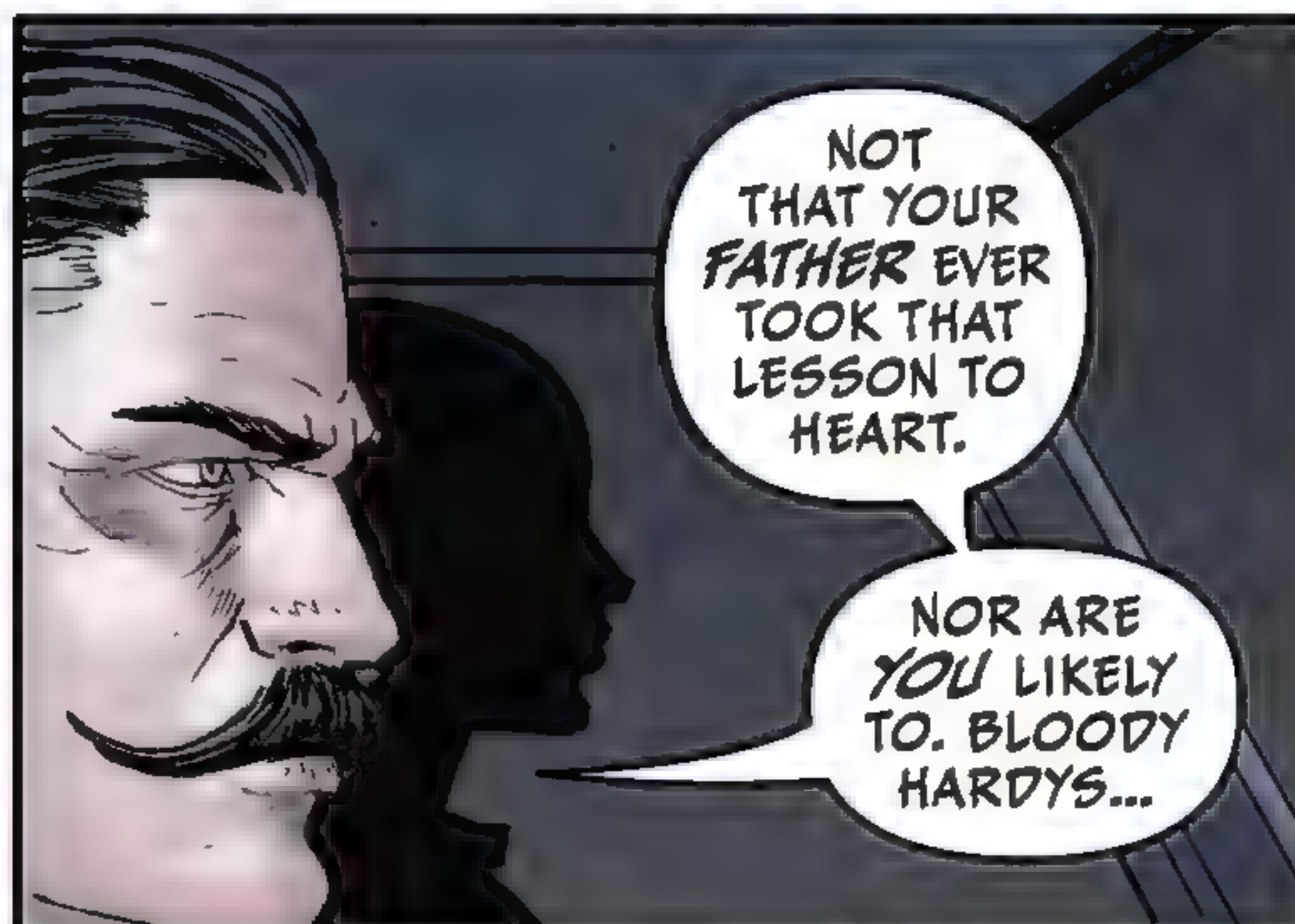
90% OF THE
TIME, A VIOLENT
CONFRONTATION
CAN BE RESOLVED
BY EITHER RUNNING
AWAY FROM OR
PAYING OFF THE
THREAT.

COWARD?
SO MUCH FOR
THE NERVE YOU
KEEP TALKING
ABOUT.



YOU'RE
CONFLATING
NERVE AND
BRAVERY.

NERVE
ENTAILS TAKING A
CALCULATED RISK.
BRAVERY IS TAKING
A RECKLESS ONE.

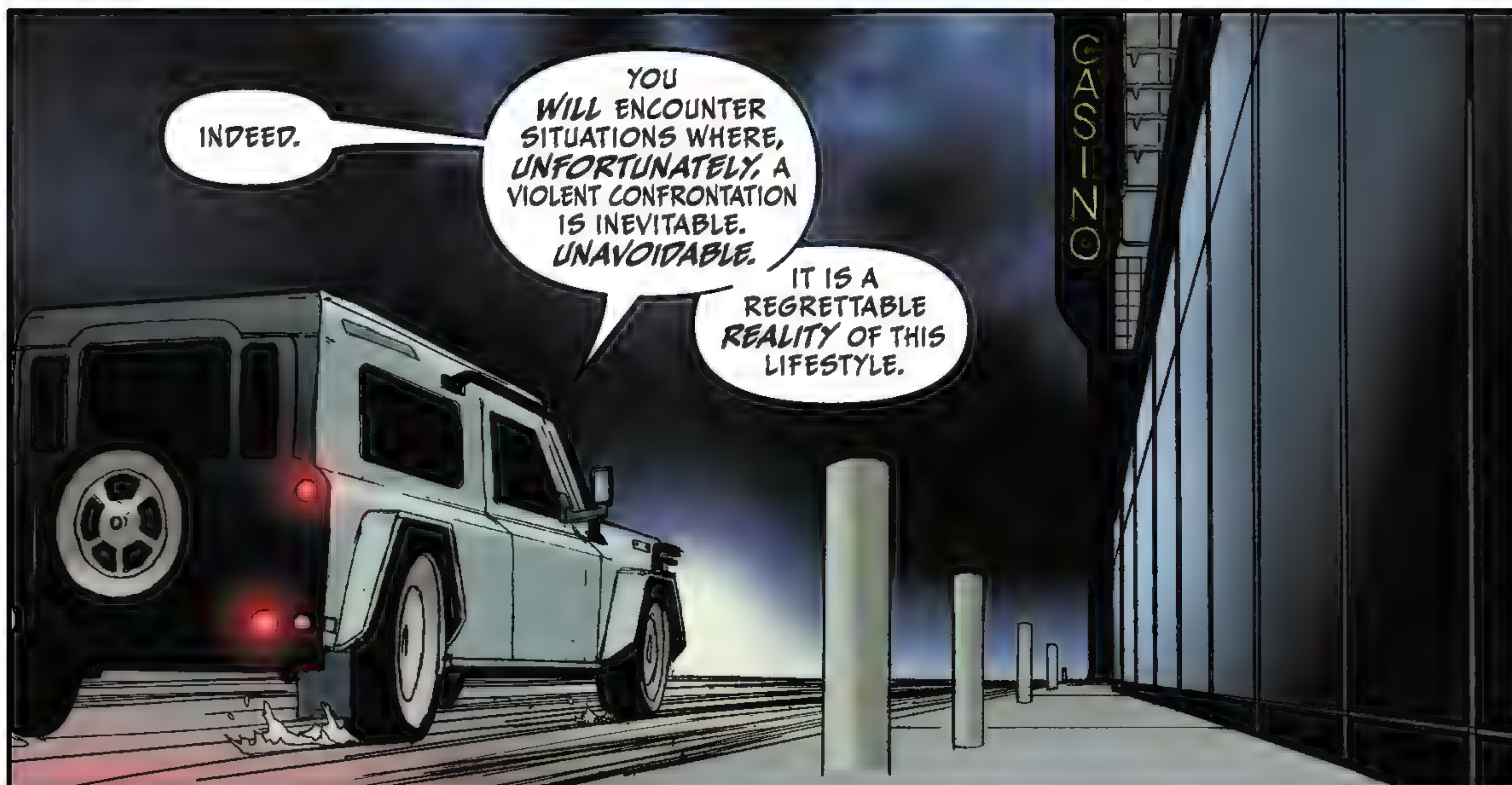


NOT
THAT YOUR
FATHER EVER
TOOK THAT
LESSON TO
HEART.

NOR ARE
YOU LIKELY
TO. BLOODY
HARDYS...



NOW I'M NO
MASTERMIND
EXCELLO, BUT
SEEMS TO ME THAT
STILL LEAVES THE
10%, FOX.



INDEED.

YOU
WILL ENCOUNTER
SITUATIONS WHERE,
UNFORTUNATELY, A
VIOLENT CONFRONTATION
IS INEVITABLE.
UNAVOIDABLE.

IT IS A
REGRETTABLE
REALITY OF THIS
LIFESTYLE.



TAKE CLANCY SHANNON, FOR INSTANCE.

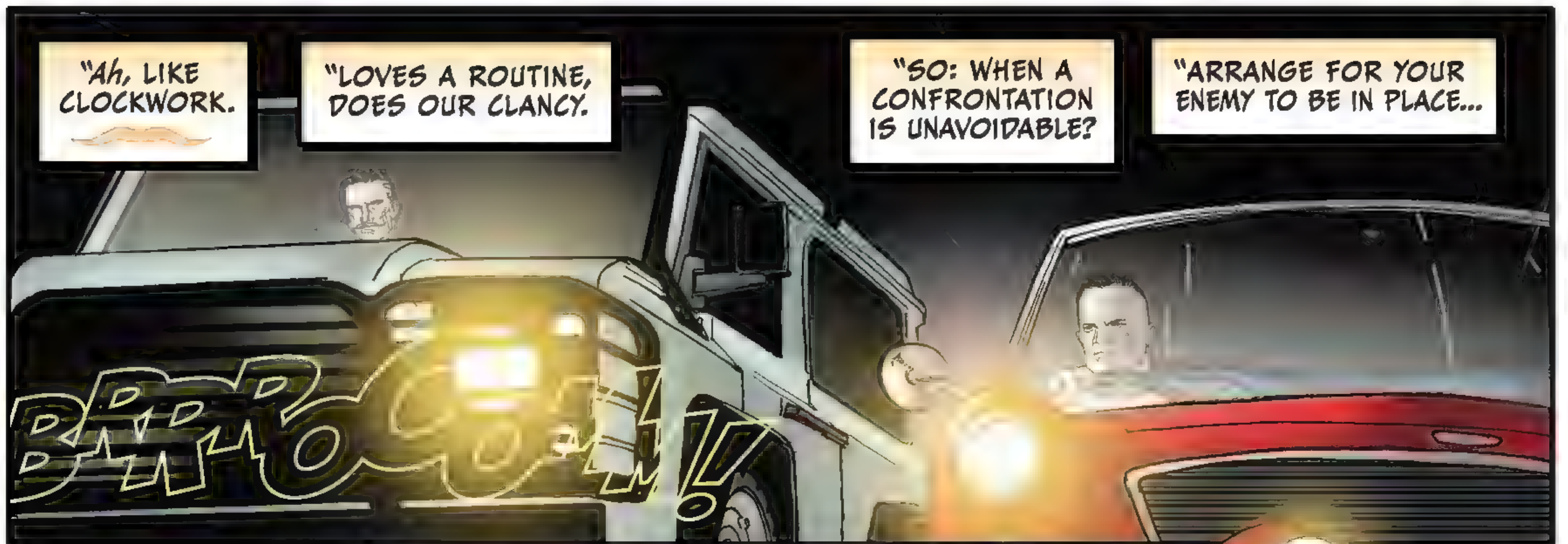
OUR CLANCY HAS MADE HIS INTENTIONS CLEAR, AND YET WE ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO EITHER RUN AWAY OR PAY HIM OFF.

SO MUST I FIGHT HIM? I THINK NOT.



WIMP. I'D FIGHT CLANCY.

YO, THERE HE IS.



"Ah, LIKE CLOCKWORK."

"LOVES A ROUTINE, DOES OUR CLANCY."

"SO: WHEN A CONFRONTATION IS UNAVOIDABLE?"

"ARRANGE FOR YOUR ENEMY TO BE IN PLACE..."

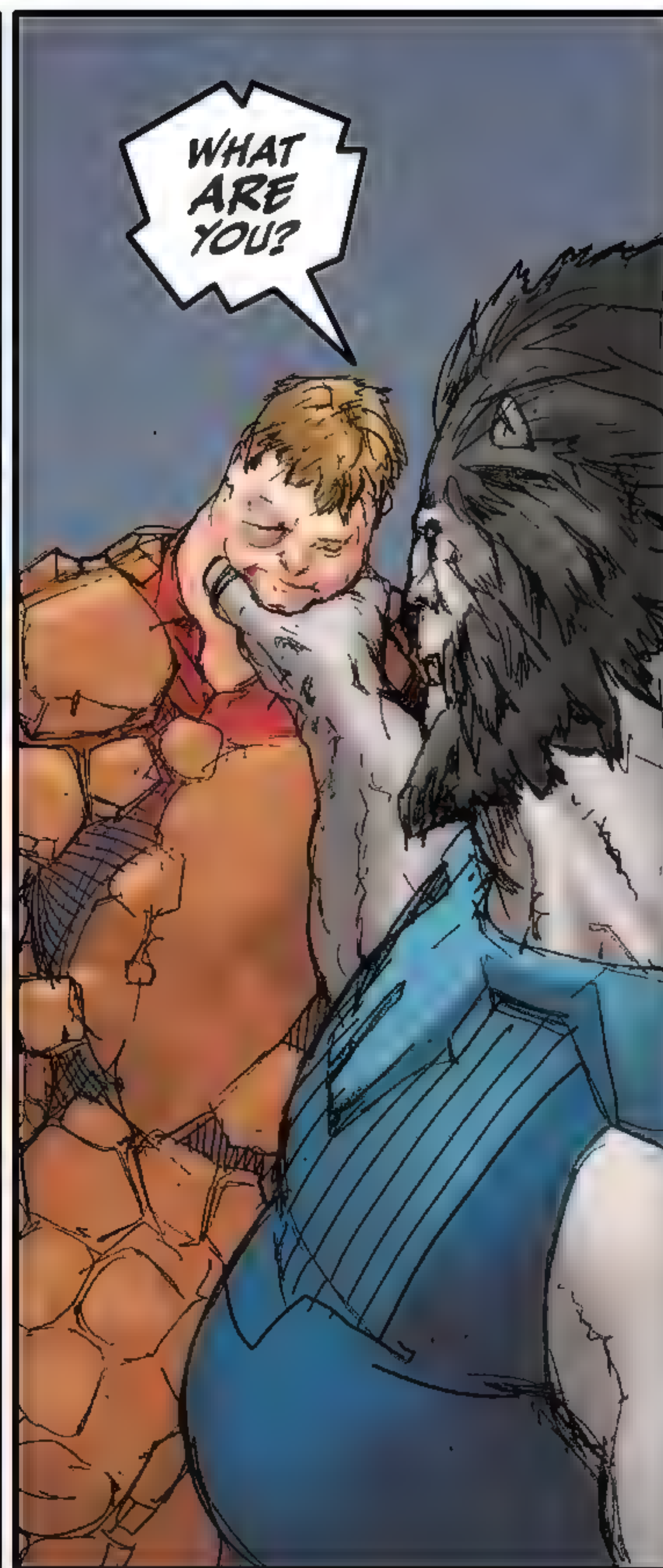


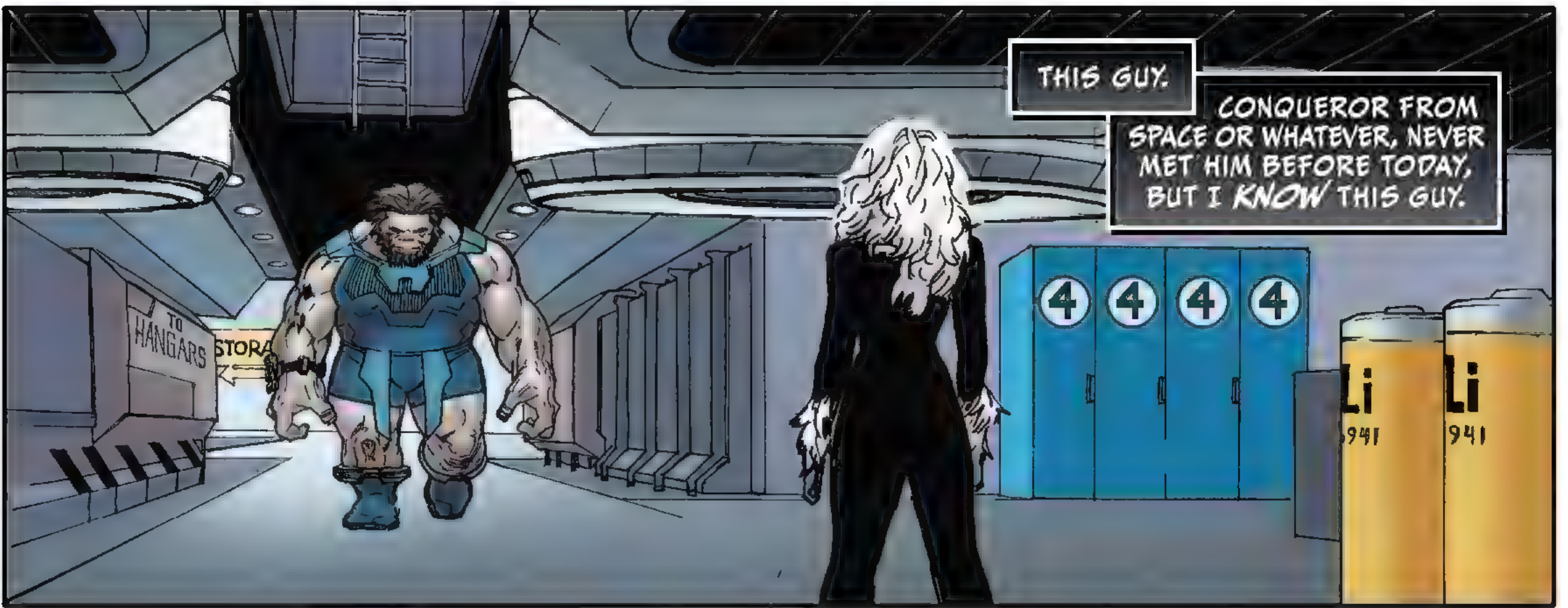
"AND BRING 4,000 lbs OF BRITISH AUTOMOTIVE ARTISTRY."

=Gasp=

SKREEE!

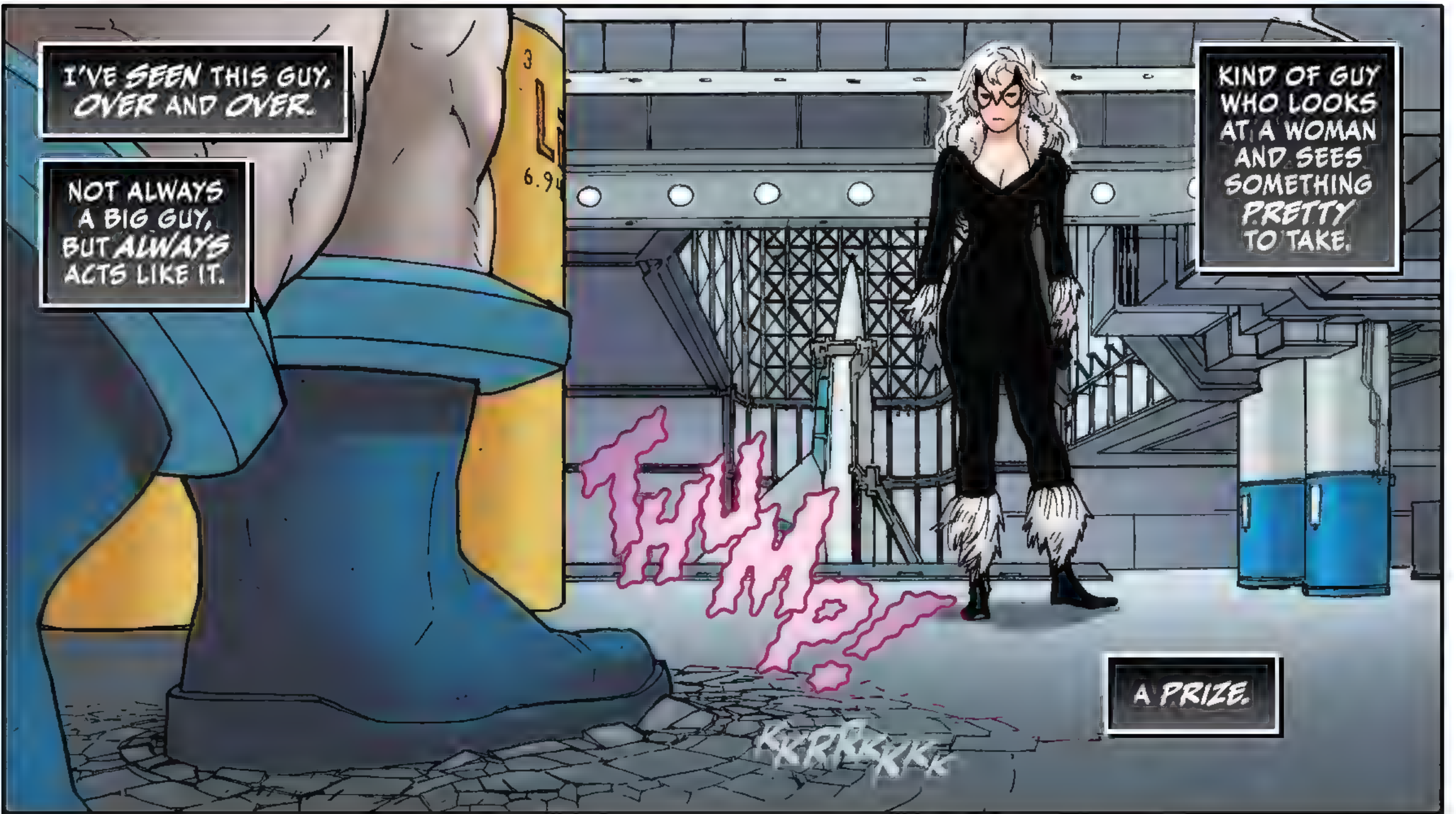






THIS GUY.

CONQUEROR FROM SPACE OR WHATEVER, NEVER MET HIM BEFORE TODAY, BUT I KNOW THIS GUY.



I'VE SEEN THIS GUY, OVER AND OVER.

NOT ALWAYS A BIG GUY, BUT ALWAYS ACTS LIKE IT.

KIND OF GUY WHO LOOKS AT A WOMAN AND SEES SOMETHING PRETTY TO TAKE.

A PRIZE.

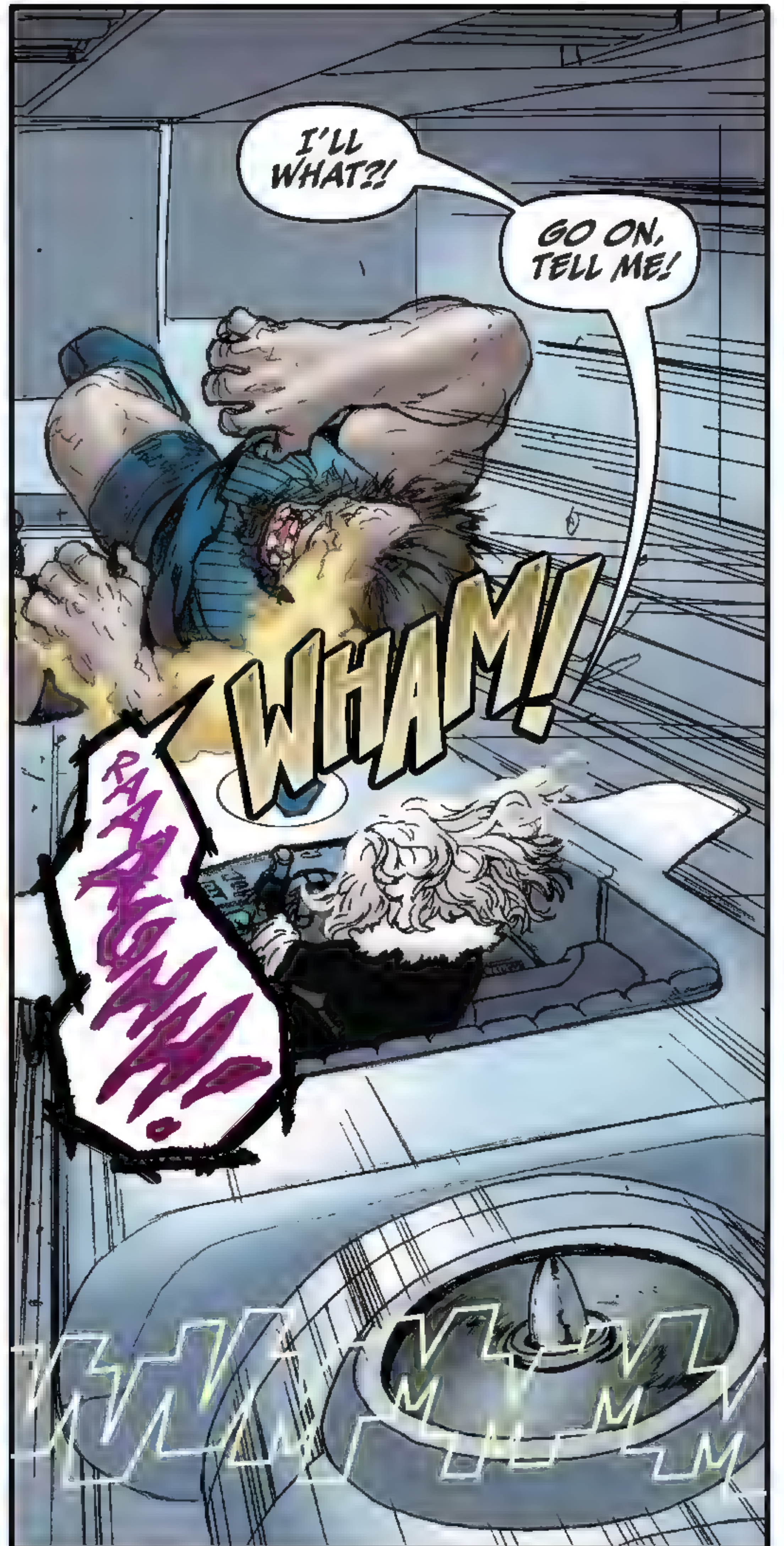
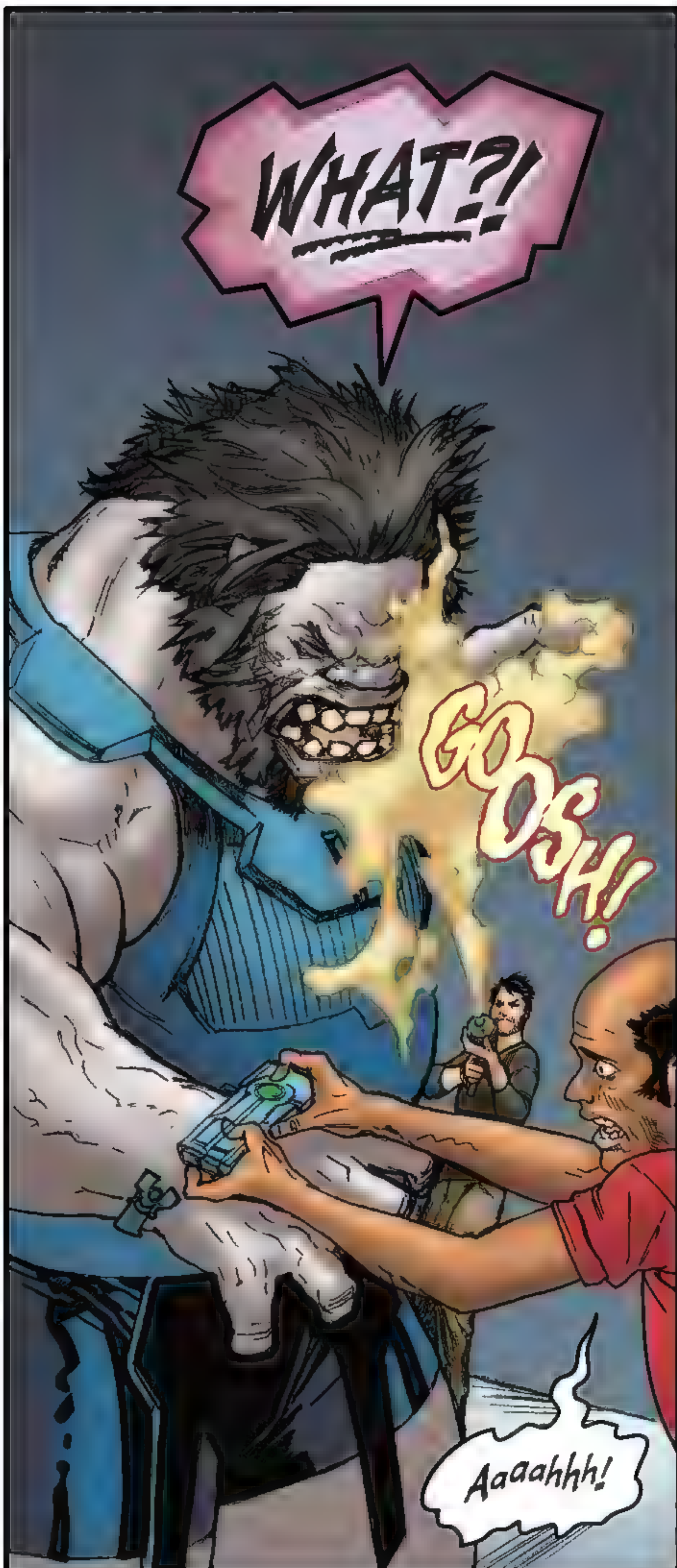
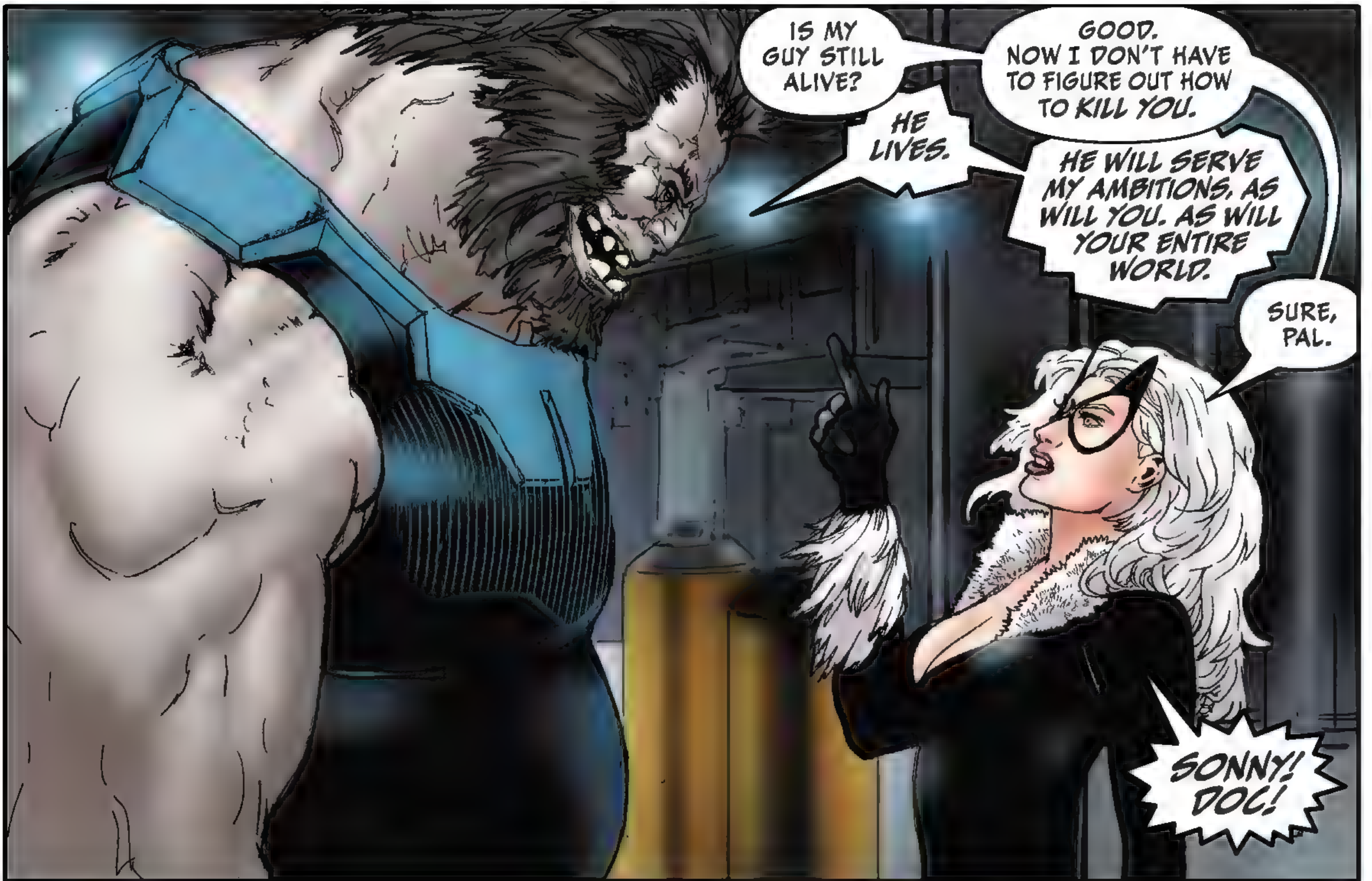


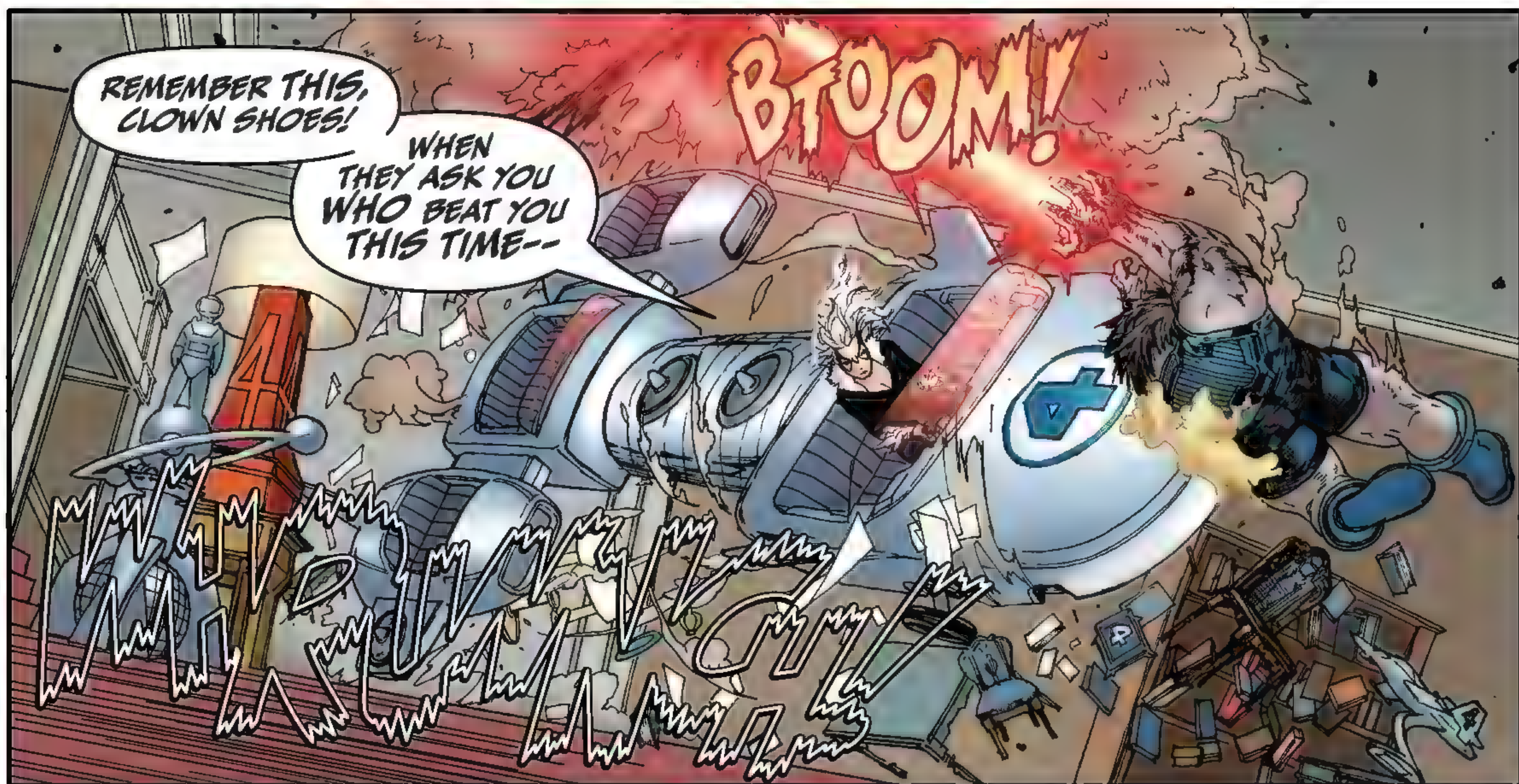
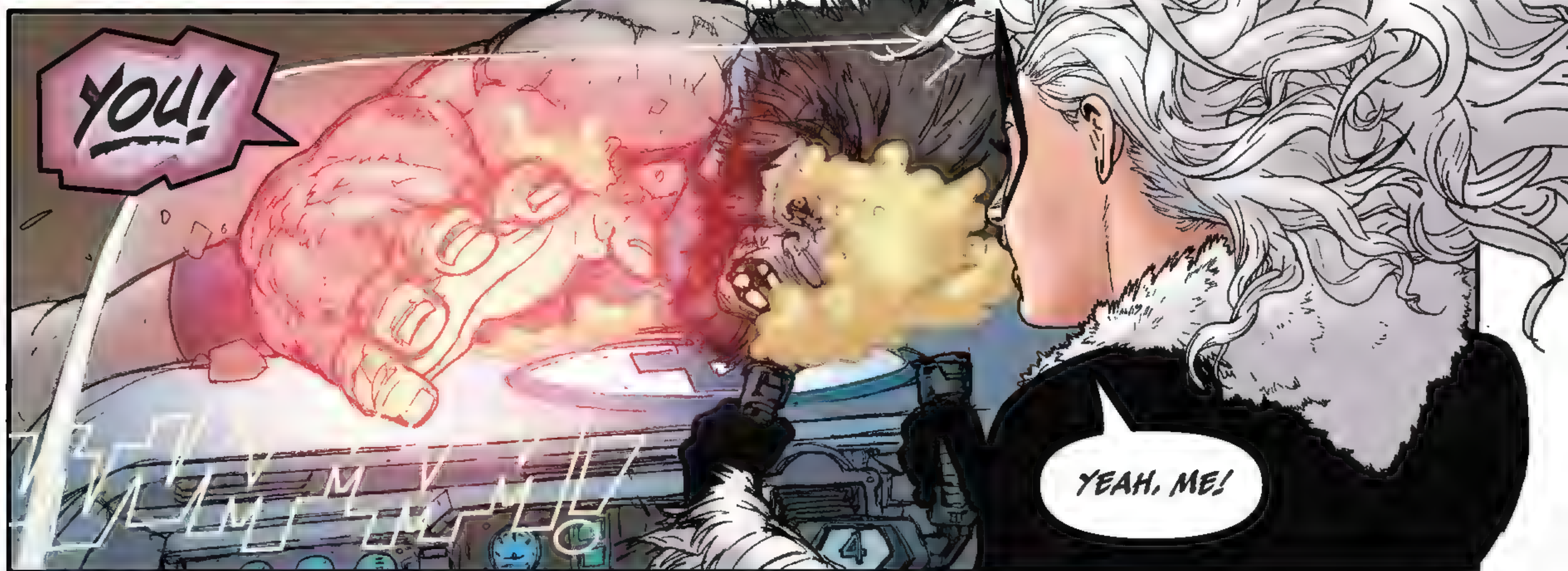
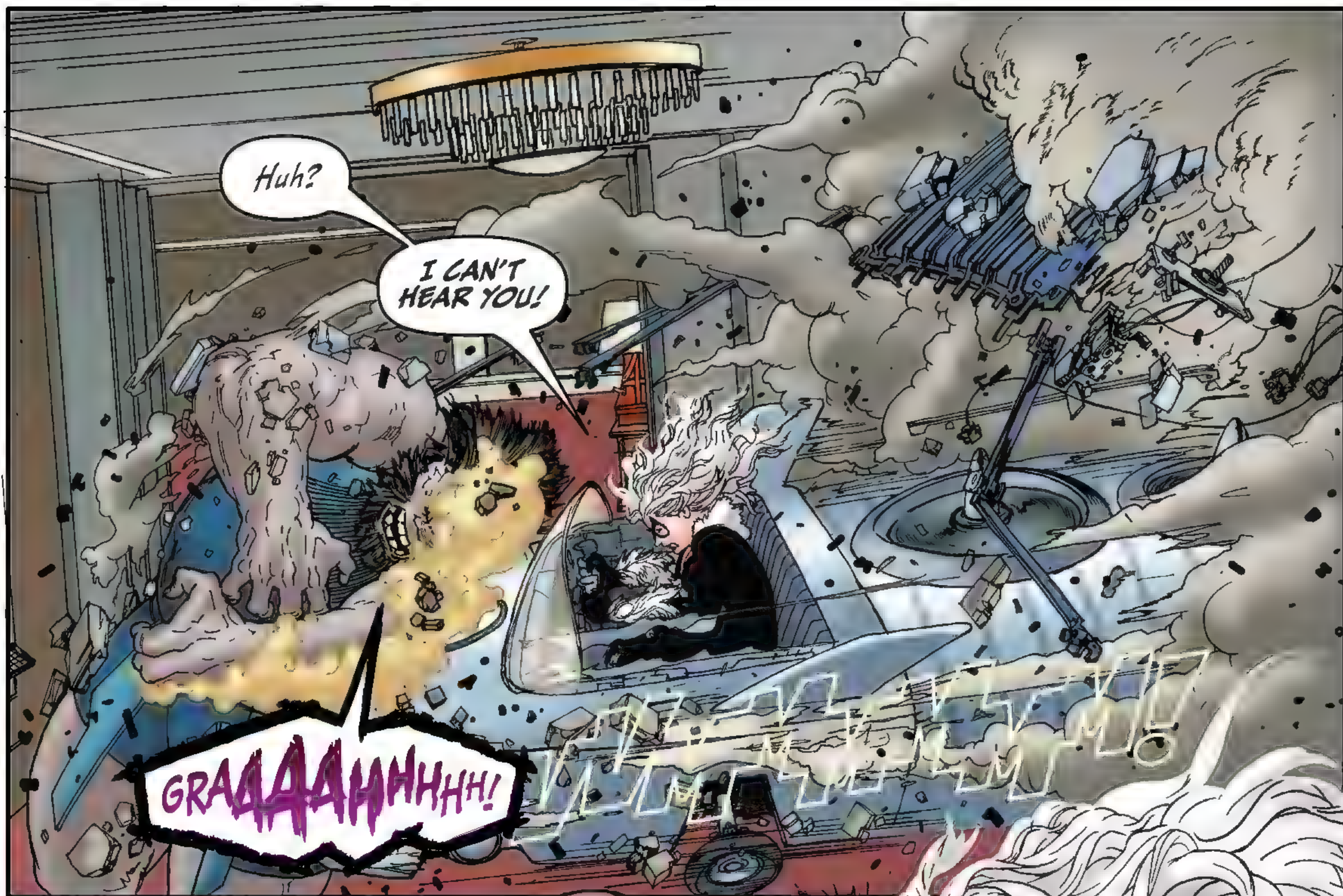
NEVER A PERSON.

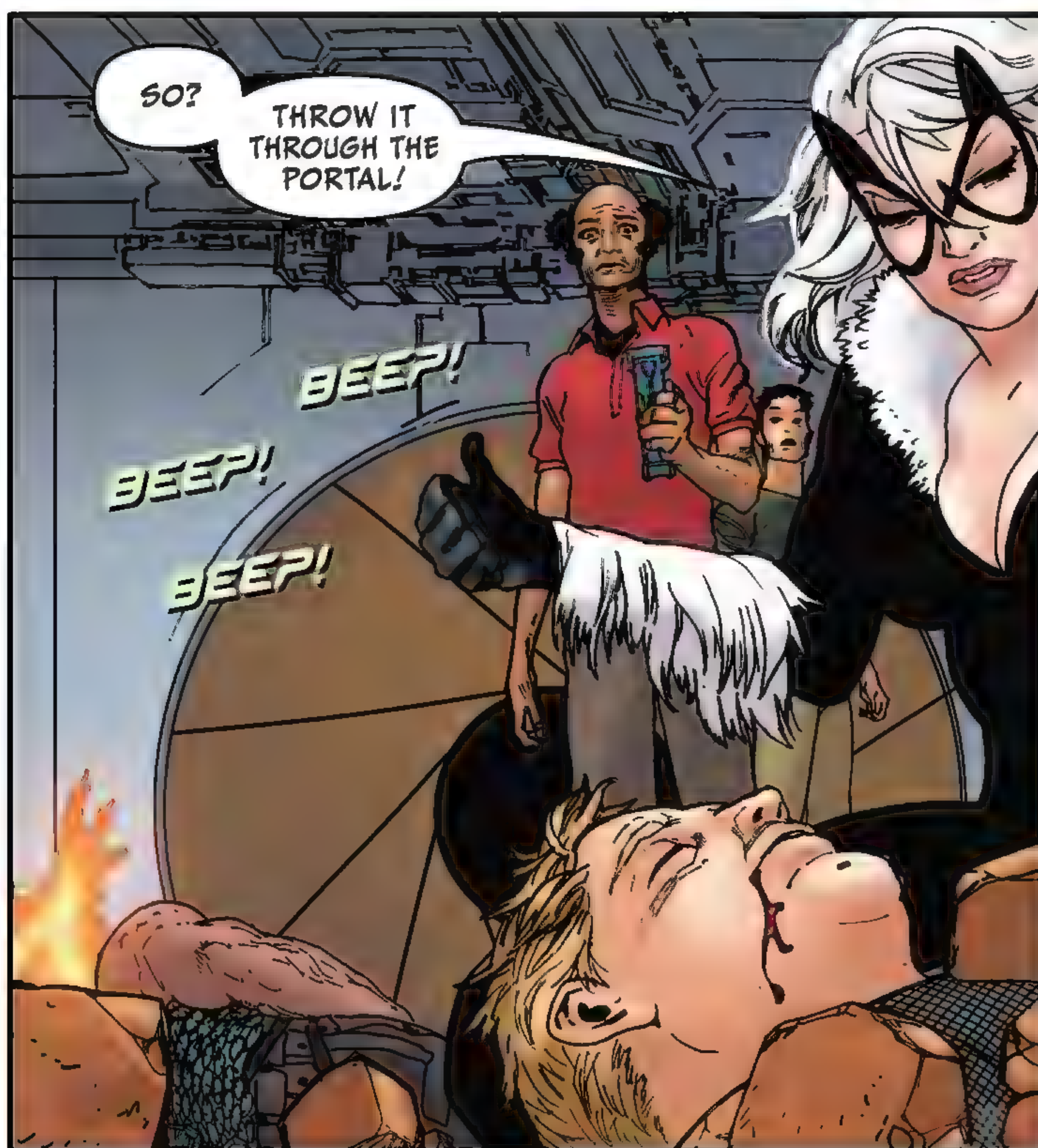
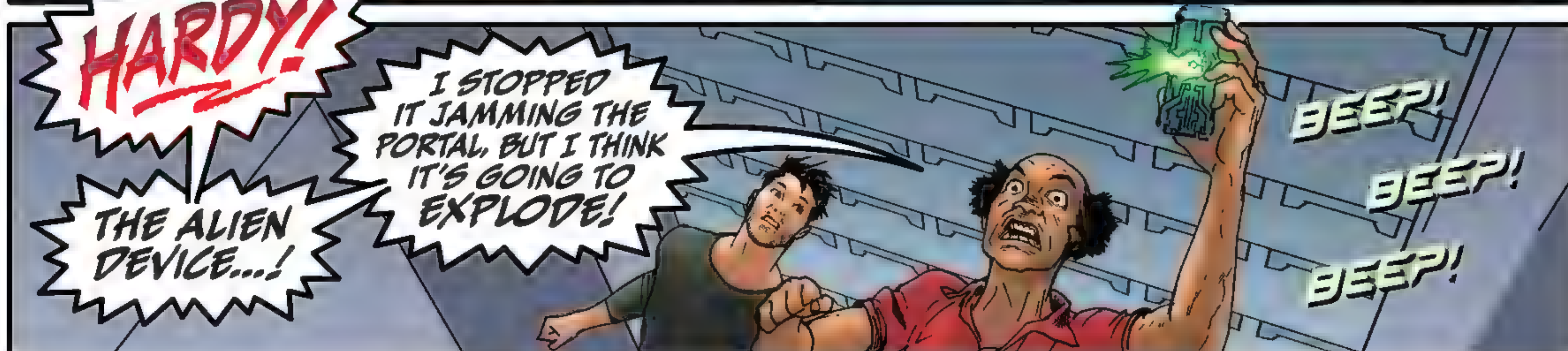
I MAY BE A BAD PERSON, STILL FIGURING THAT OUT.



BUT I AM A PERSON.











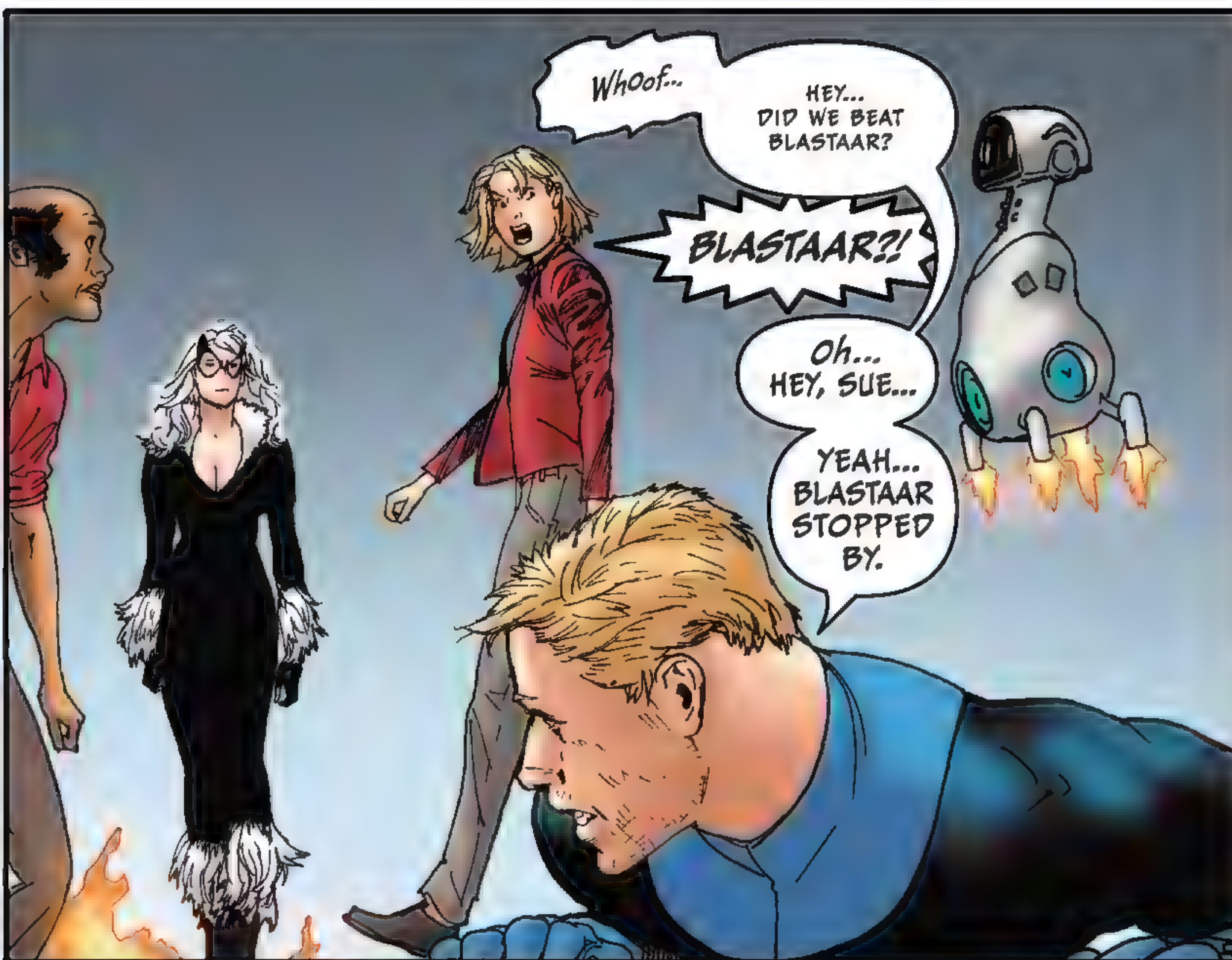
OKAY.

NOW DOES
SOMEONE WANT
TO TELL ME WHY
MY HOUSE IS IN
SHAMBLES?

AND
WHERE MY
BROTHER
IS?

AND WHY
THERE WAS A
BOMB--?!

--IN MY
HOUSE?!?!?



Whoof...

HEY...
DID WE BEAT
BLASTAAR?

BLASTAAR?!

Oh...
HEY, SUE...

YEAH...
BLASTAAR
STOPPED
BY.



**AND WHAT IS
SHE DOING
HERE?!**

HI,
WE MET
BEFORE,
I'M

**I KNOW WHO
YOU ARE.**

SUE,
RELAX!

FELICIA'S
AN OLD
FRIEND,
SHE CAME
BY FOR
LUNCH.



THE
DELIVERY GUYS
GOT CAUGHT IN
THE CROSSFIRE
WHEN BLASTAAR
RIPPED OPEN
THE GATE.

YOU
KNOW
HOW IT
GOES!



ENOUGH.
ENOUGH.

THERE'S
AN
AMBULANCE
OUTSIDE.
EVERYONE
OUT!



EVERYONE
WHO DOESN'T
LIVE HERE,
JOHNNY.

DANG IT.



SO WE GOING TO THROW DOWN NOW?

DEPENDS, ARE YOU GOING TO COME WITH ME?

CUTE. WE'RE A PRETTY PAIR, BUT YOU DON'T WANT TO RASSLE WITH ME, SONNY.



I SPY WITH MY LITTLE EYE...

GANG TATTOOS, BUT OLD. SO YOU'RE NOT IN THE GAME ANYMORE, BUT YOU'RE ALSO NOT A COP.

SO WHAT... CITIZEN'S ARREST?

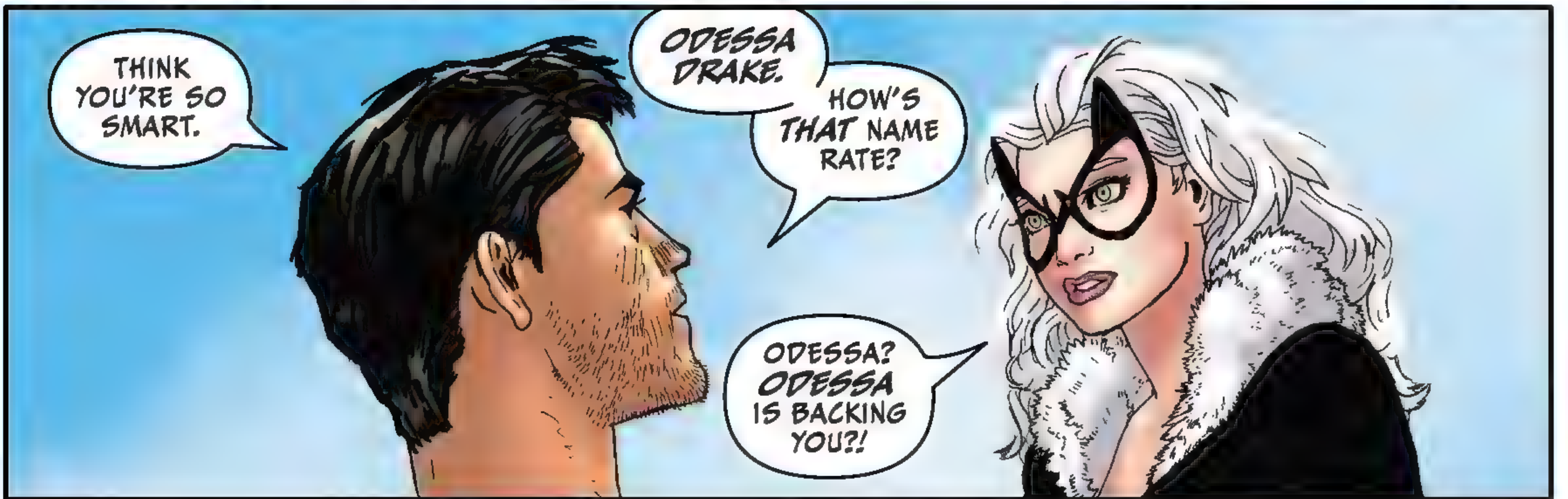


HEY, I'M WORKING FOR SOME IMPORTANT PEOPLE--

NO, NOT WITH THAT LAW AND JUSTICE RAP FROM EARLIER.

MAGGIA? HAMMERHEAD?

FISK? HE'D NEVER HIRE SOMEONE WITH IDEALS.

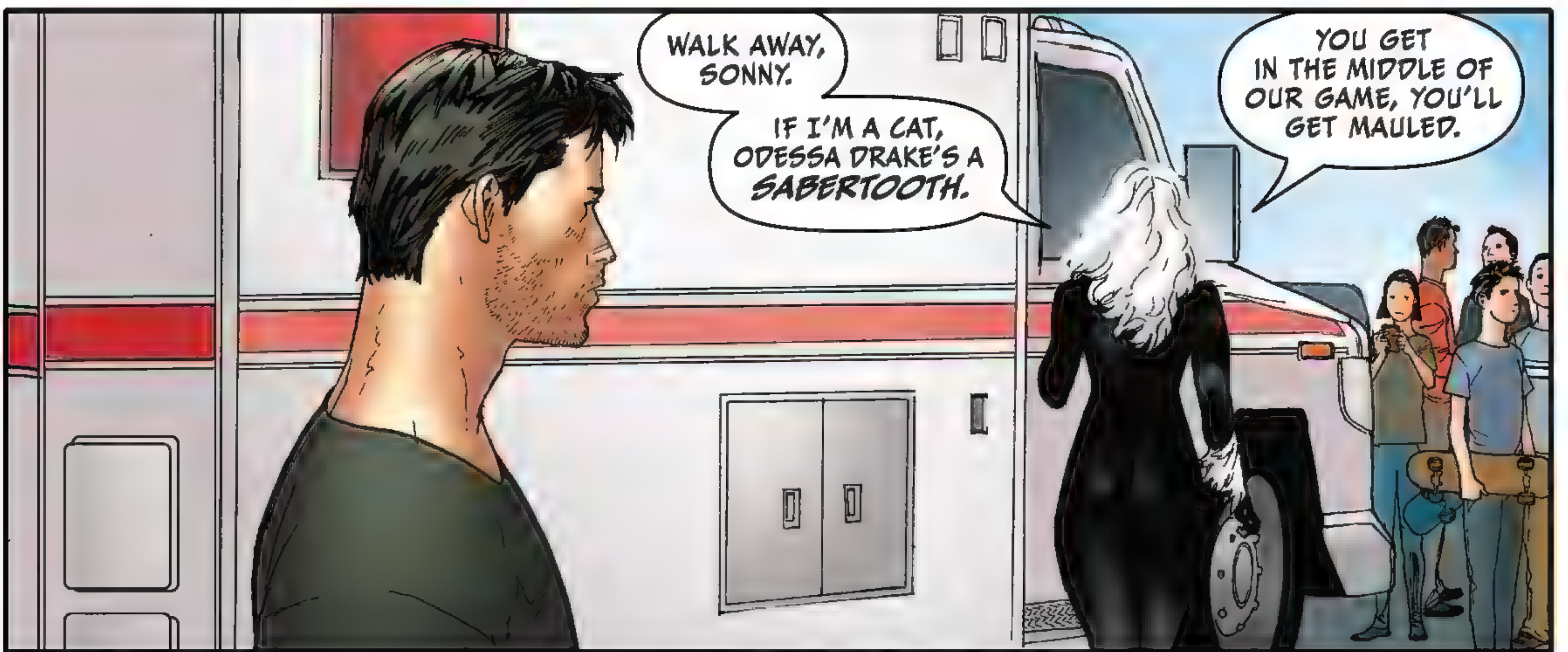


THINK YOU'RE SO SMART.

ODESSA DRAKE.

HOW'S THAT NAME RATE?

ODESSA? ODESSA IS BACKING YOU?!



WALK AWAY, SONNY.

IF I'M A CAT, ODESSA DRAKE'S A SABERTOOTH.

YOU GET IN THE MIDDLE OF OUR GAME, YOU'LL GET MAULED.



DAMMIT,
THIS ISN'T A
GAME!

THIS IS
MY LIFE!

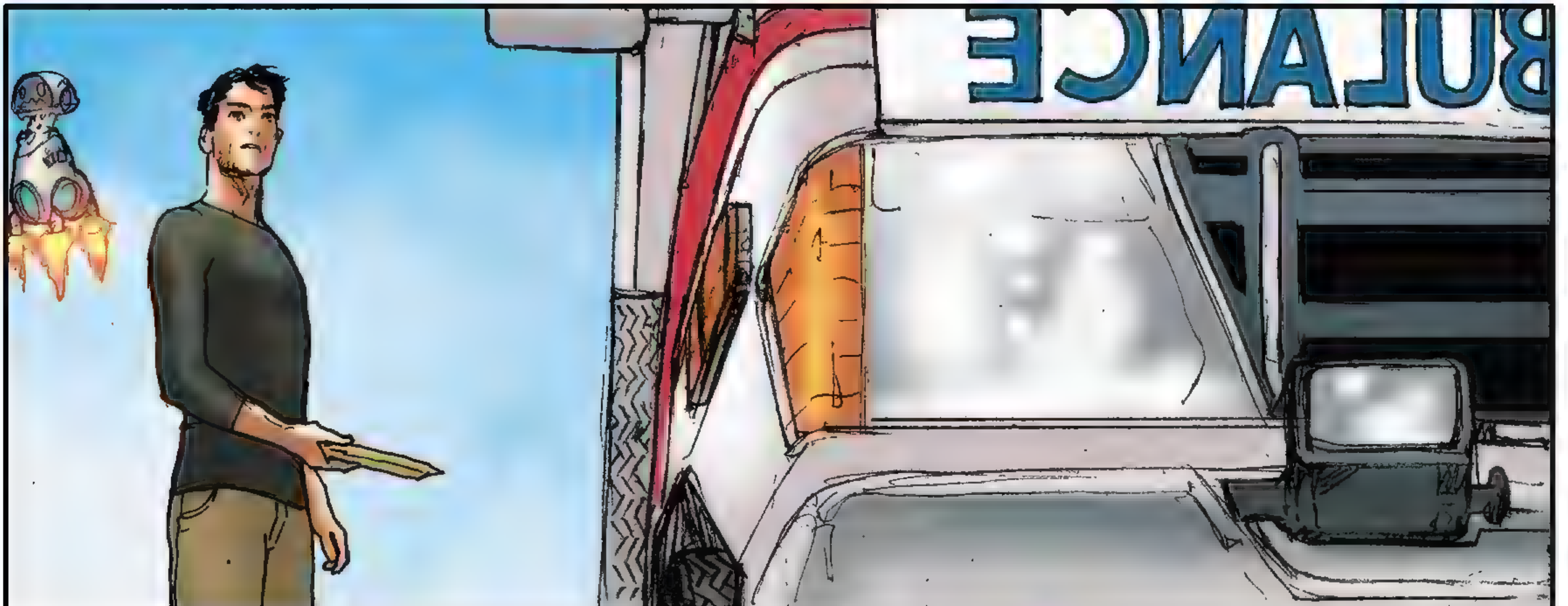


LISTEN,
I DID YOU
WRONG. FAIR
ENOUGH.

HERE'S
TEN GRAND,
AND MY
ADVICE--

WALK
AWAY FROM
ODESSA--

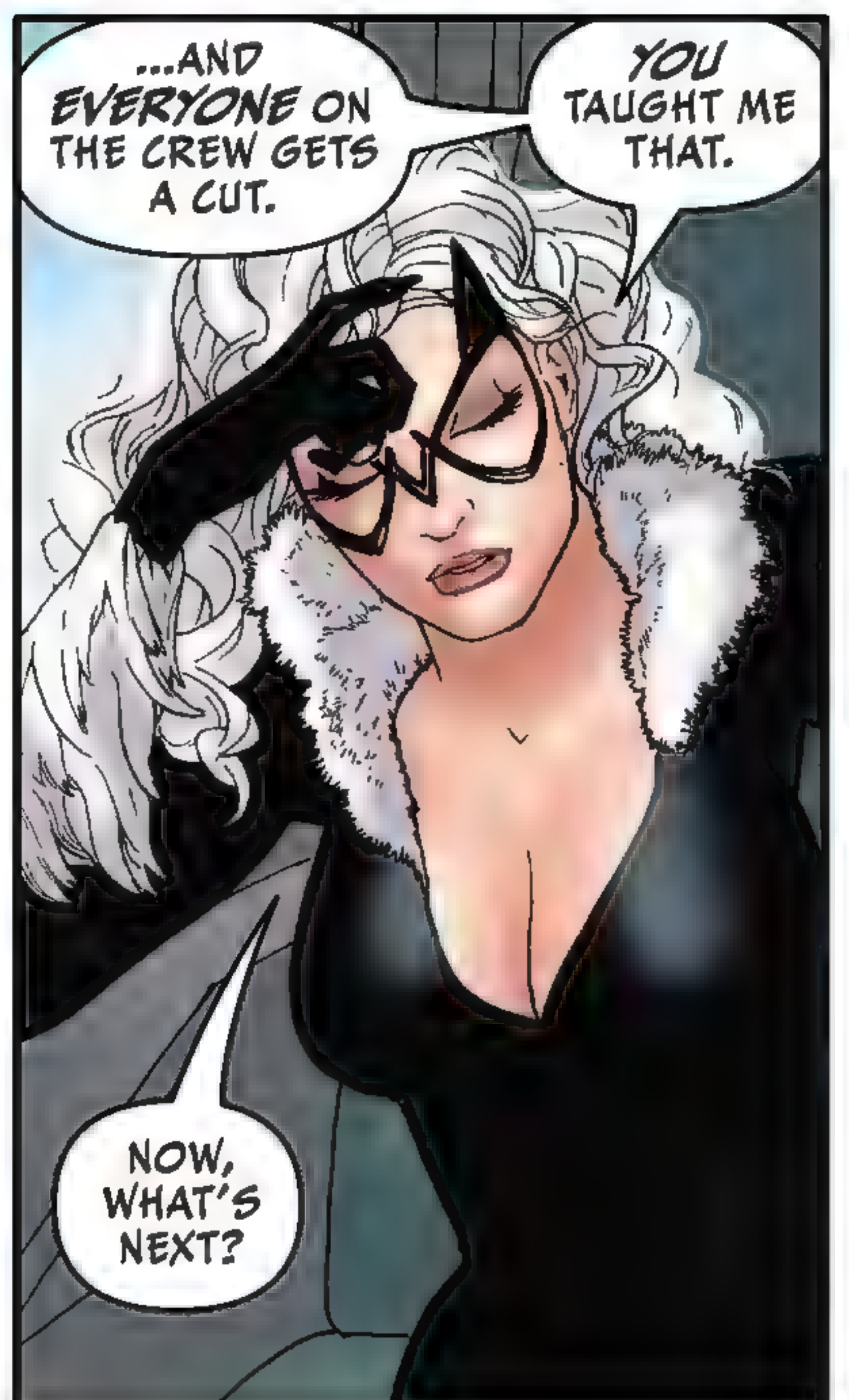
--WHILE
YOU CAN.



HOW
CURIOUS.

WHY IN THE
WORLD WOULD YOU
GIVE THAT BOY THE
PETTY CASH?

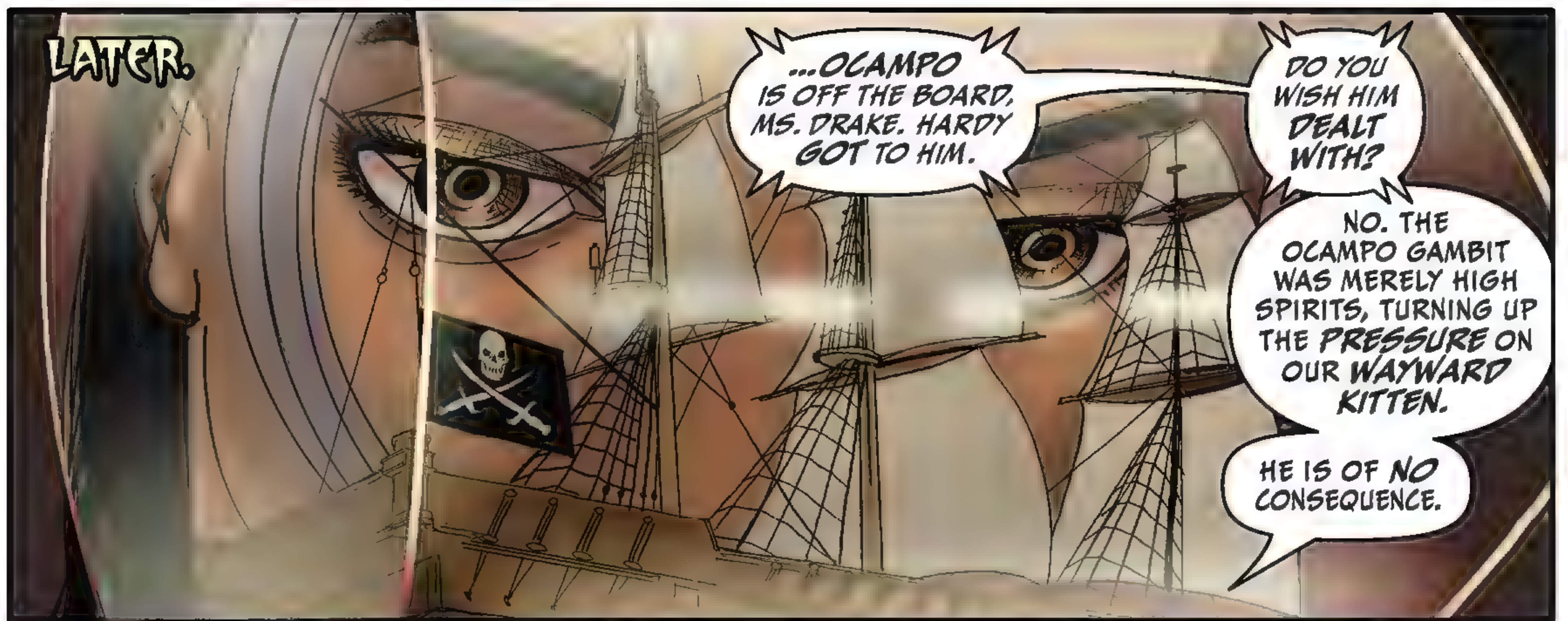
HE WAS
PART OF THE
CREW, FOX...



...AND
EVERYONE ON
THE CREW GETS
A CUT.

YOU
TAUGHT ME
THAT.

NOW,
WHAT'S
NEXT?



LATER.

...OCAMPO
IS OFF THE BOARD,
MS. DRAKE. HARDY
GOT TO HIM.

DO YOU
WISH HIM
DEALT
WITH?

NO. THE
OCAMPO GAMBIT
WAS MERELY HIGH
SPIRITS, TURNING UP
THE **PRESSURE** ON
OUR **WAYWARD**
KITTEN.

HE IS OF NO
CONSEQUENCE.



WE HAVE
OTHER NEWS,
MS. DRAKE.

GOOD
NEWS, I
HOPE.



INTERESTING
NEWS.

DO TELL.

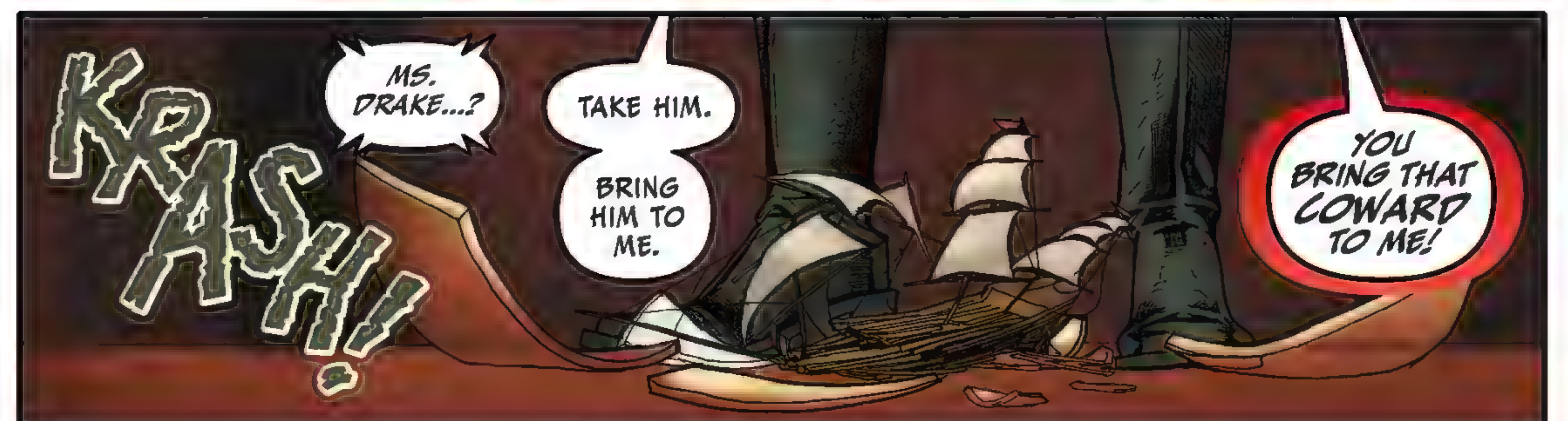


IT'S ABOUT
WHATEVER HARDY
IS UP TO.

MS.
DRAKE...

...SHE'S
WORKING WITH
THE **BLACK**
FOX.

HE'S
BACK.

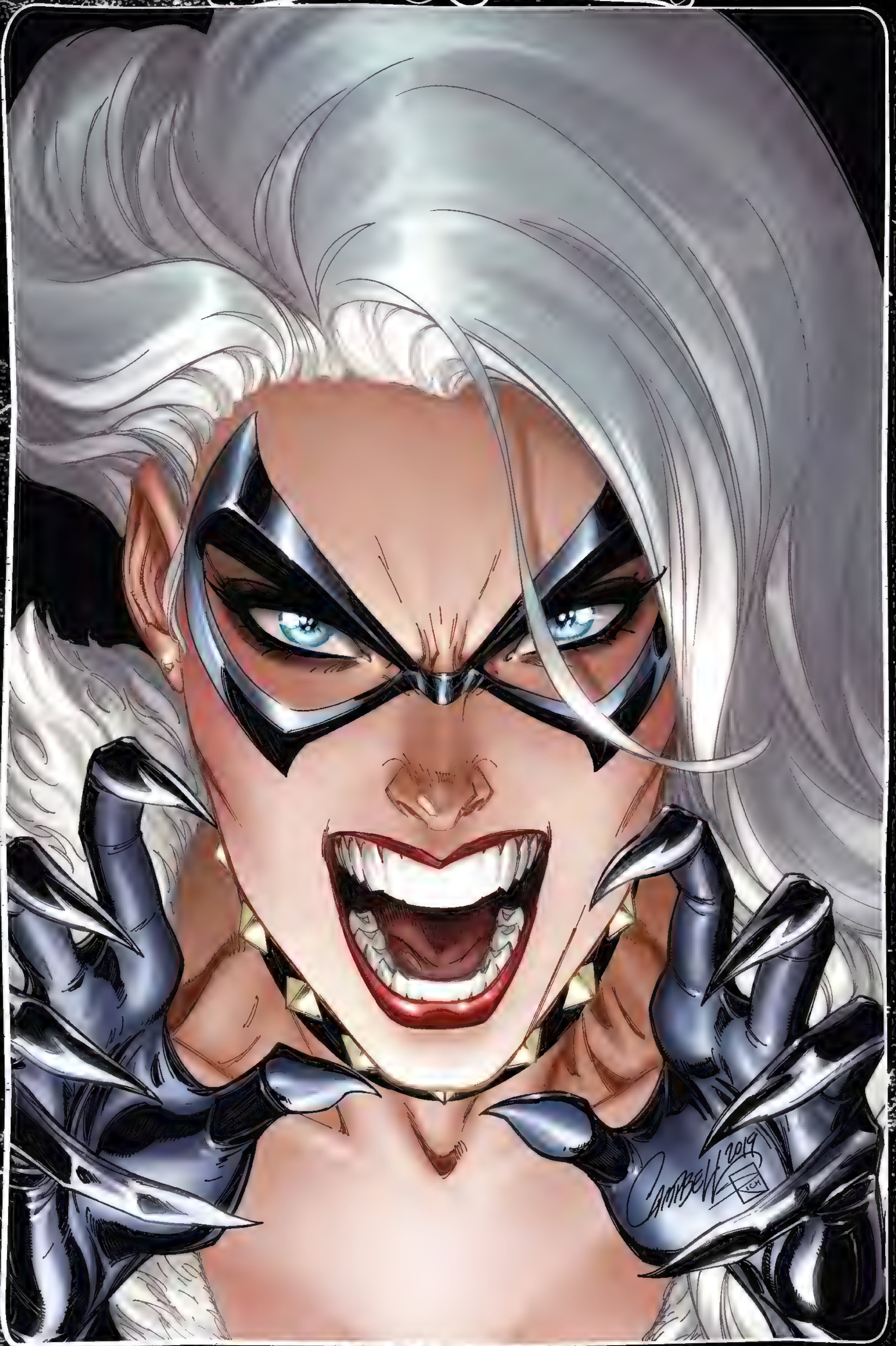


KRASH!

MS.
DRAKE...?

TAKE HIM.
BRING
HIM TO
ME.

YOU
BRING THAT
COWARD
TO ME!

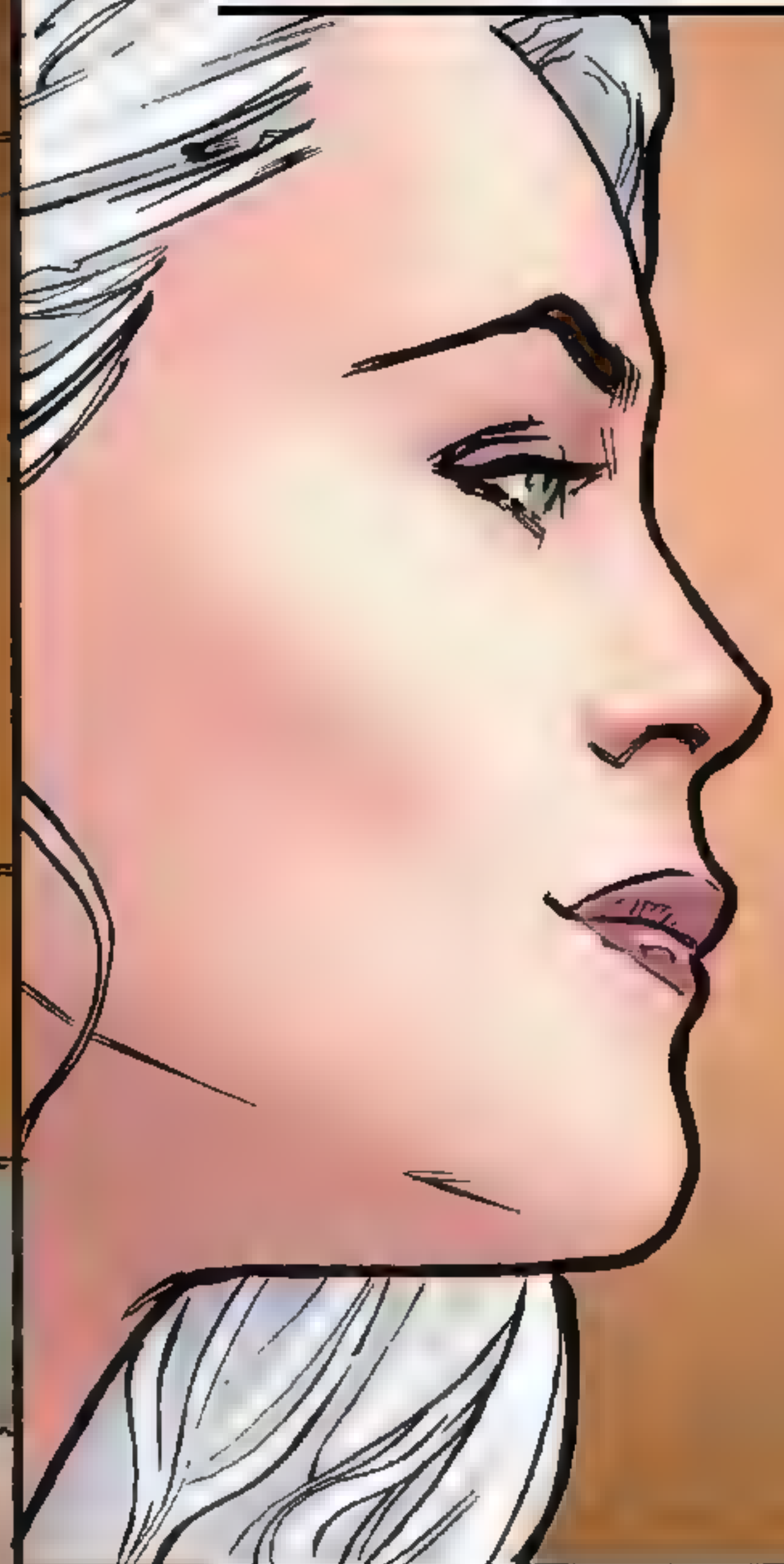


NO BIZ
TONIGHT.

NO RIPPING,
NO RUNNING,
NO LOOTING,
NO SHOOTING.



TONIGHT IS STRICTLY
R&R, WHICH IS MAYBE A
LITTLE MORE DAUNTING.



TONIGHT?
I'M ON A
DATE.

NOTHING TO DO WITH
THE GUILD HEIST. NO
ULTERIOR MOTIVES.



Ka-POW!

GOD HELP US ALL.

BACK END
LIKE A GAT-DANG
WORK OF ART,
DAMN.





DATING IN
THIS GAME?

IT'S
ROUGH.

ONE OF THE
DOWNSIDES
TO THE LIFE.

LOT OF LOSERS AND
WEIRDOS IN THE OLD
SUPER-CRIME RACKET.
AND THE HEROES? I'VE
BEEN DOWN THAT ROAD.



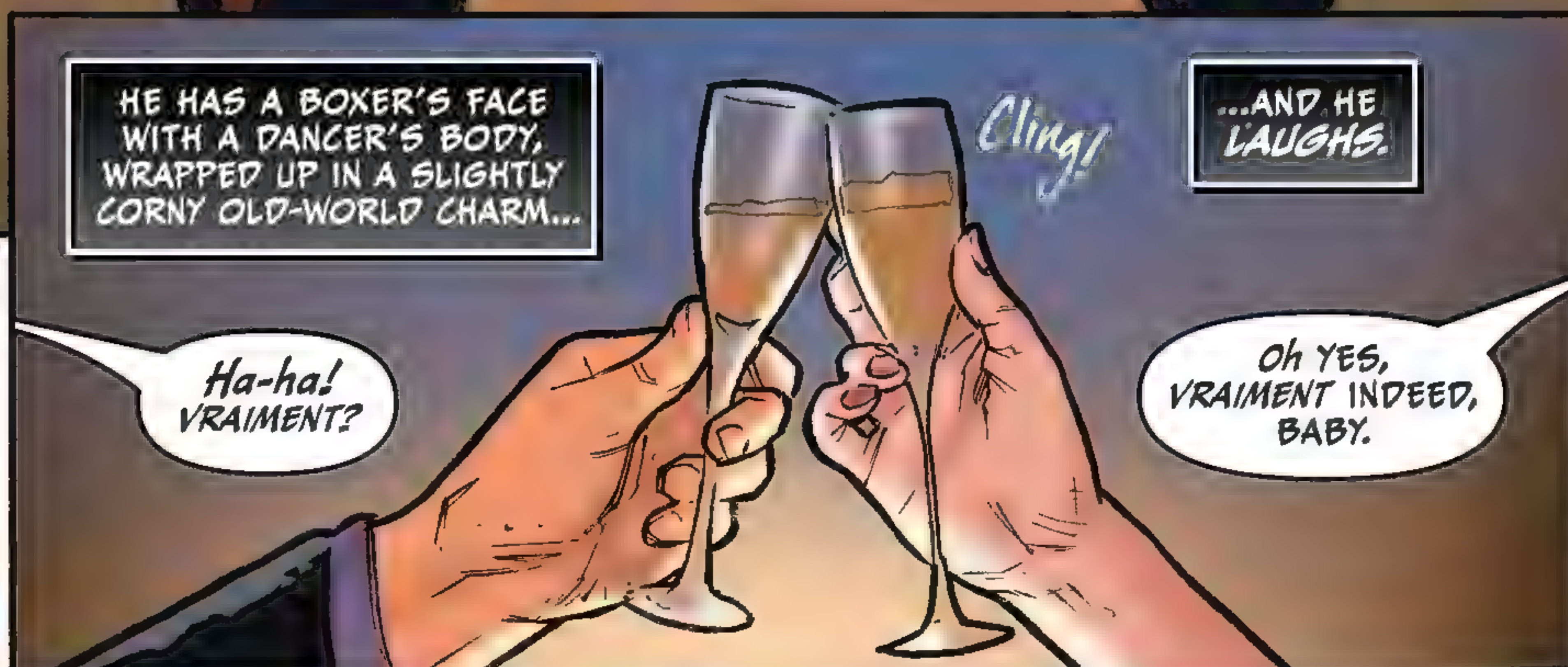
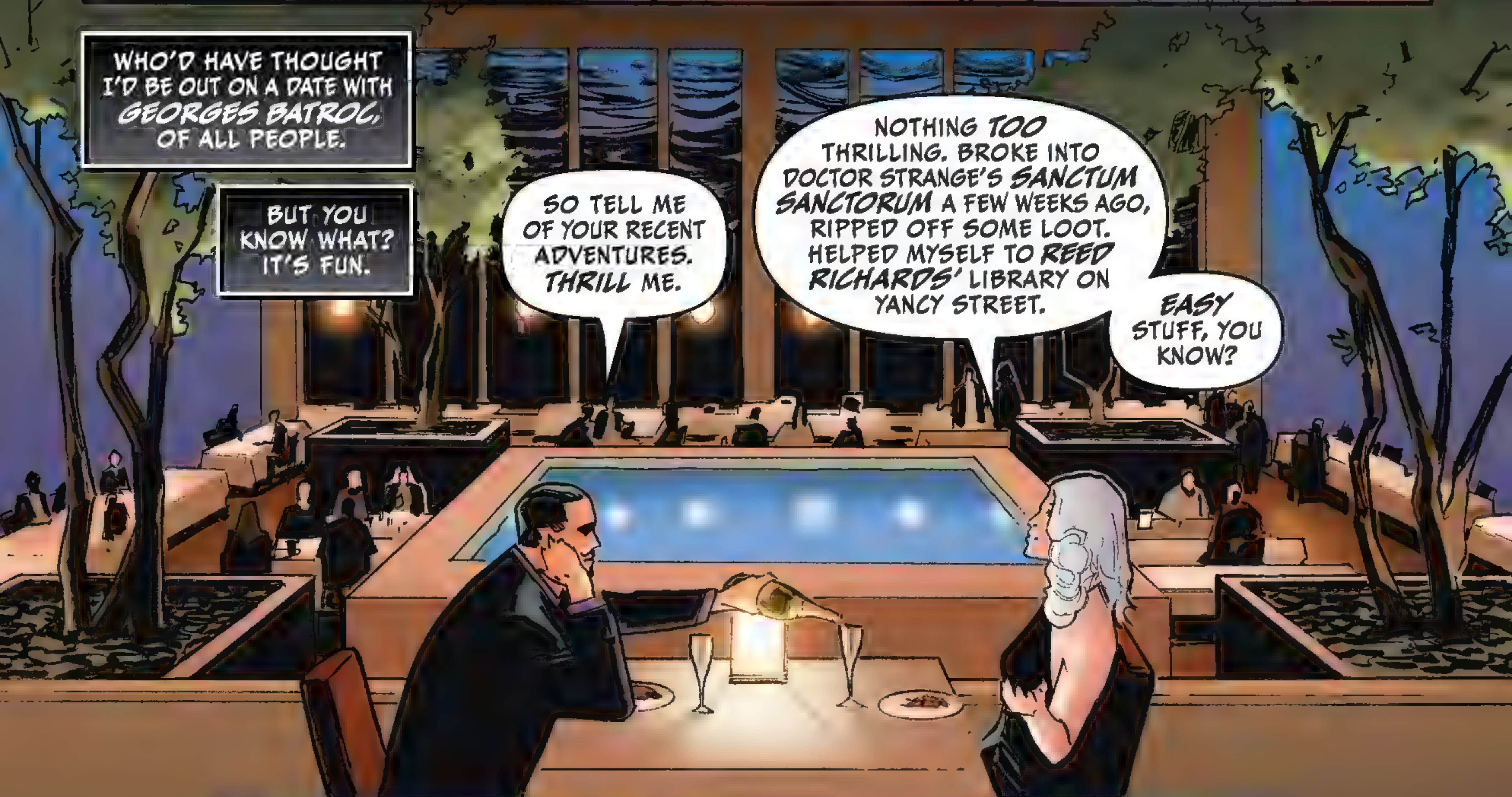
YOU HAVE TO CAST A WIDE NET.
SEE WHAT YOU CAN CATCH.

USUALLY, IT COMES
UP FULL OF DUDS.



BUT SOMETIMES,
YOU GET A SURPRISE.

SPLOOSH!



SWAT!

"WHAT ABOUT YOU?
BETWEEN GIGS?"

"NON, I AM ON MY WAY NORTH.
MY SKILLS HAVE BEEN REQUESTED
IN CANADA, OF ALL PLACES."

"I LIKE IT THERE.
THEY SPEAK FRENCH."

"I THOUGHT YOU ALL
HATED CANADIAN FRENCH?"

BLOOM!

"PAS MOI."

"WHEREVER I HEAR IT,
IN WHATEVER FORM,
I FEEL I AM HOME."

"WE'RE ALL
SENTIMENTAL,
I SUPPOSE."

"THE BLACK FOX,
MY MENTOR--HE LOVES CONEY
ISLAND, SAYS IT REMINDS HIM OF
GROWING UP ON BRIGHTON PIER."

"WE ALL LOOK FOR HOME
WHERE WE CAN FIND IT."



...FOUND IT
EXTRAORDINARY
AT THE TIME--

THE *CAT* AND
THE *SPIDER*. *C'EST*
INCROYABLE! A THIEF
AND A HERO? HOW
DID SUCH A THING
COME ABOUT?

WHAT CAN
I SAY?

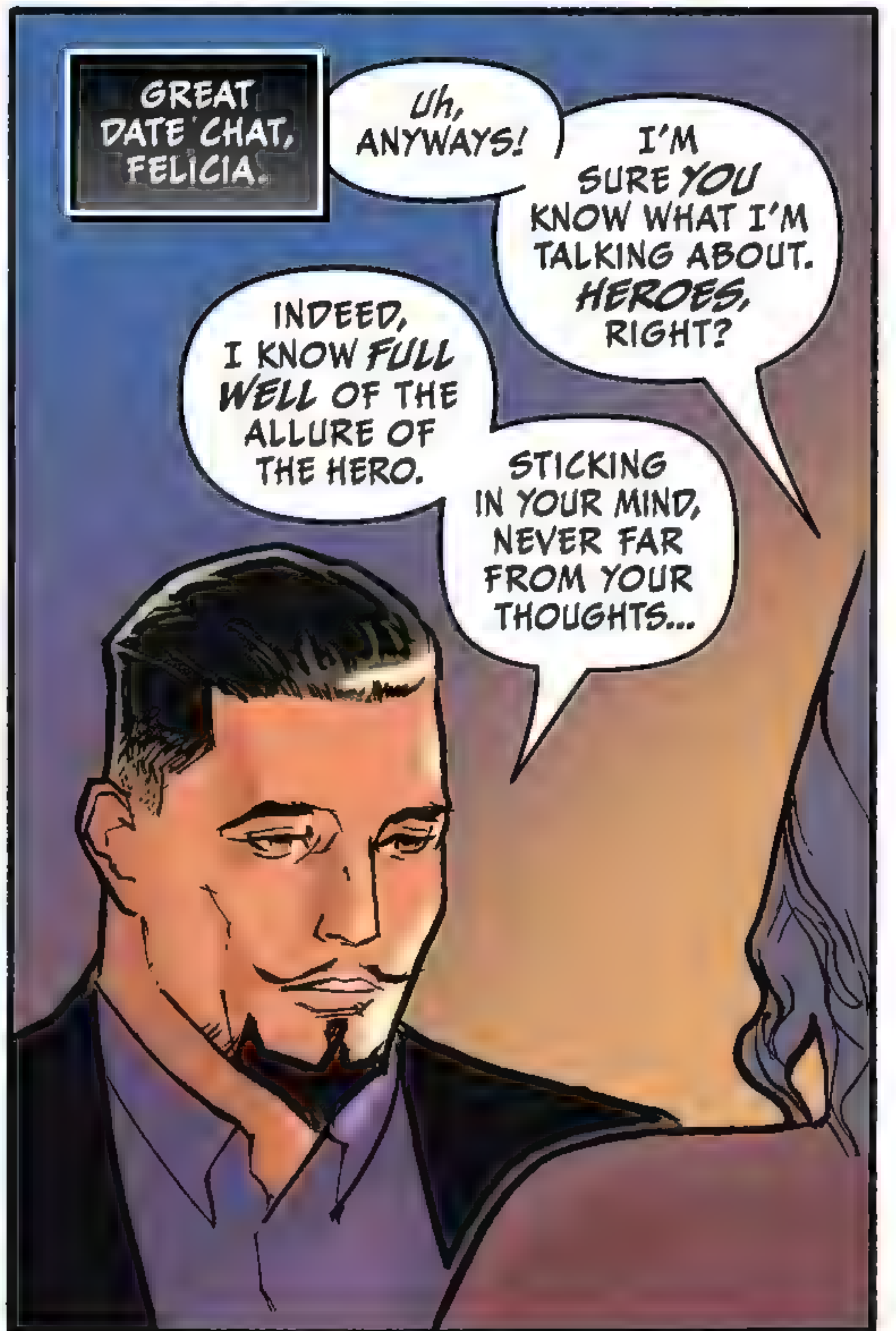


I WAS YOUNG,
AND ON MY FIRST
BIG JOB ON
MY OWN.

WHEN
I SAW HIM,
THAT WAS IT.
I HAD TO
HAVE HIM.

THAT'S
WHAT MAKES US
THIEVES, ISN'T IT?
WHEN WE WANT WHAT
WE CAN'T HAVE.
MONEY, STATION,
POSSESSIONS...

...EVEN
PEOPLE.



GREAT
DATE 'CHAT,
FELICIA.

Uh,
ANYWAYS!

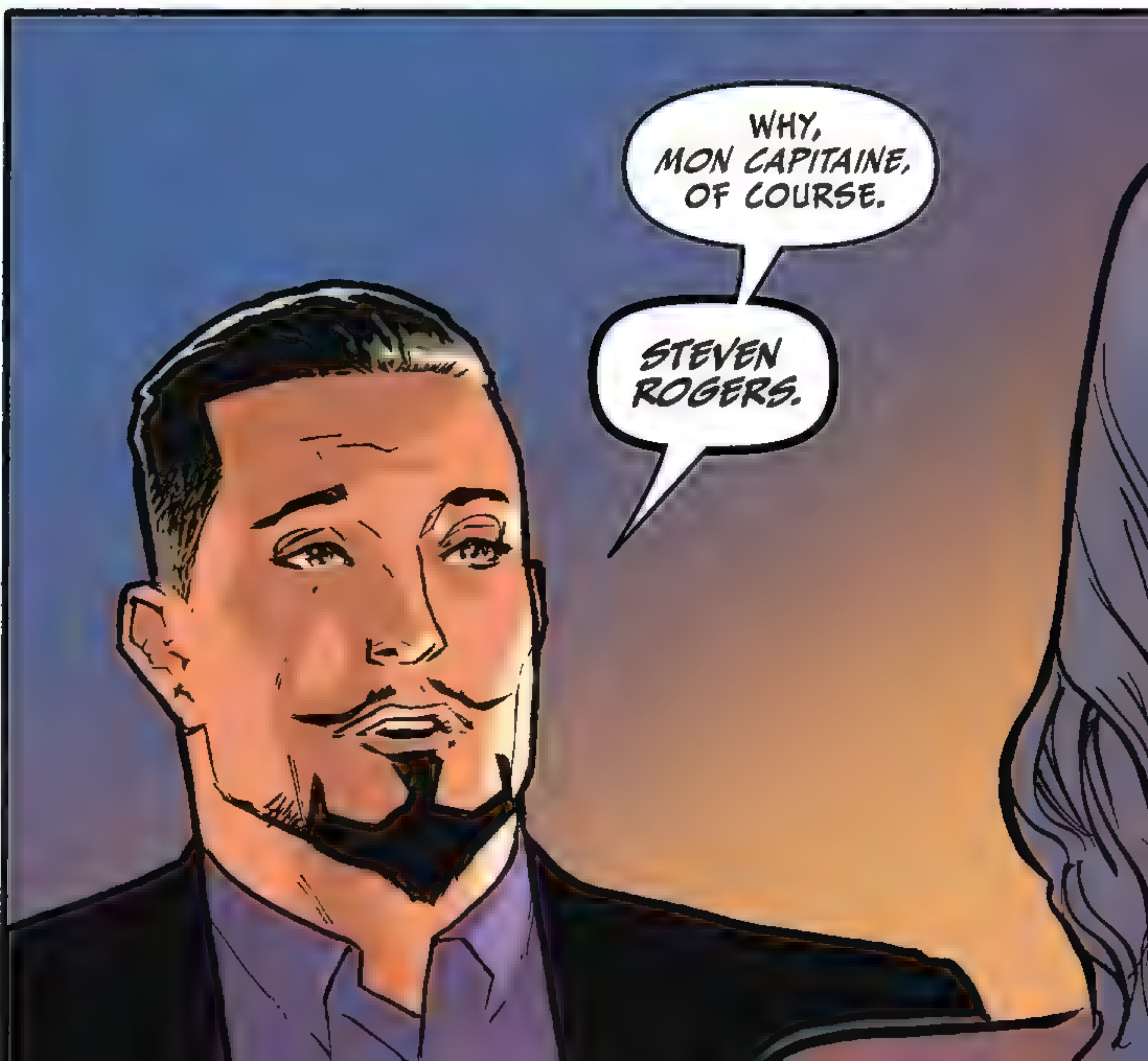
I'M
SURE YOU
KNOW WHAT I'M
TALKING ABOUT.
HEROES,
RIGHT?

INDEED,
I KNOW *FULL*
WELL OF THE
ALLURE OF
THE HERO.

STICKING
IN YOUR MIND,
NEVER FAR
FROM YOUR
THOUGHTS...



Oh
YEAH?
DISH.



WHY,
MON CAPITAINE,
OF COURSE.

STEVEN
ROGERS.

"HA! I WAS REFERRING
TO A MORE...AMOROUS
ENTANGLEMENT."

"MAIS NON! FOR OUTSIDE
OF LOVERS, WHO ARE CLOSER
THAN THOSE LOCKED IN
PASSIONATE COMBAT?"



"IT IS ALL
THERE."

"THE HEART,
POUNDING. THE
BREATH, SHARPLY
DRAWN IN."



"A DANCE AS
INTIMATE AS THE
ACT OF LOVE."

AGK!



"AS HONEST."

"IF NOT
MORE SO."





Oh **GOOD LORD, BATROC!**

YOU ARE THE **MOST FRENCH** PERSON I HAVE EVER MET.

TO BE FRENCH IS MY **BLESSING AND PRIVILEGE.**

TO ENLIGHTEN THE **REST OF THE WORLD**, IT IS MY **BURDEN.**



HERE'S ONE FOR YOU: HAVE YOU EVER DIED?

DIED. AND COME BACK.

DIED?

IT HAPPENS IN THIS BUSINESS.



NON.

ME EITHER.

FAKED MY DEATH A COUPLE TIMES THOUGH.

Ah, OUI. CERTAINEMENT. THAT, I HAVE DONE.



IT'S TOO **EASY**, ISN'T IT? FALL OFF A CLIFF, INTO SOME WATER, AND THAT'S IT--

--THE HEROES CLOSE THE BOOK ON YOU.



AND THEN THEY GET UPSET!

"THERE HAD TO BE ANOTHER WAY! THE POOR DEVIL DIDN'T DESERVE THAT!"

HAHAHA!



TO THE HEROES.

HEAR, HEAR. **SANTÉ.**

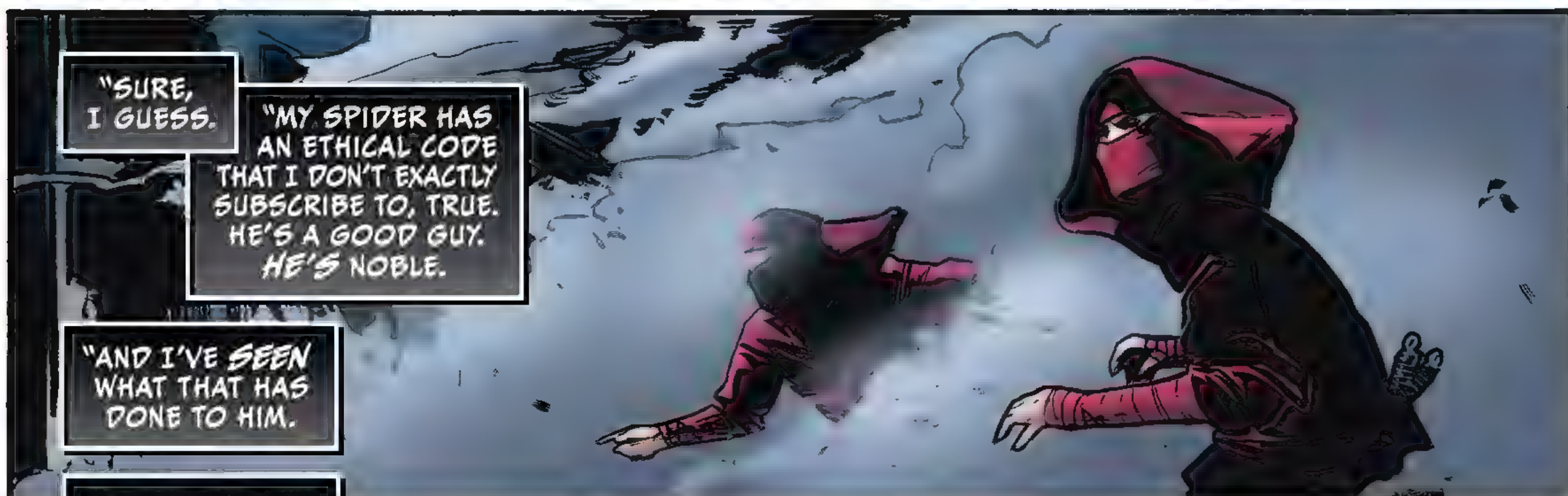
THEY'RE HOT, AND ALSO DUMB.



"PAS DUMB, JE PENSE.
BETTER, PERHAPS."

"I'M JOKING.
BUT BETTER?"

"NOBLER."



"SURE,
I GUESS."

"MY SPIDER HAS
AN ETHICAL CODE
THAT I DON'T EXACTLY
SUBSCRIBE TO, TRUE.
HE'S A GOOD GUY.
HE'S NOBLE."

"AND I'VE SEEN
WHAT THAT HAS
DONE TO HIM."

"BUT THAT'S NOT
OUR WORLD."



SWISHHHH!

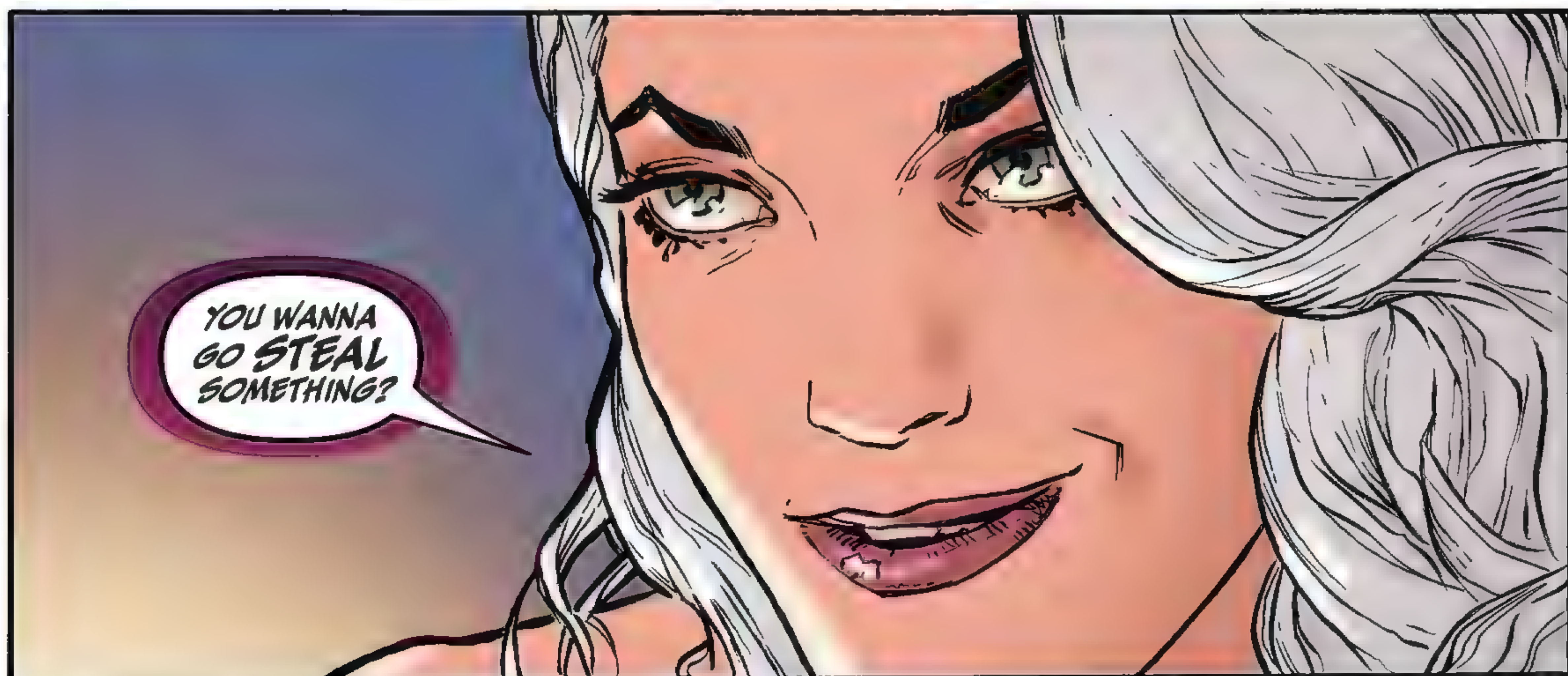
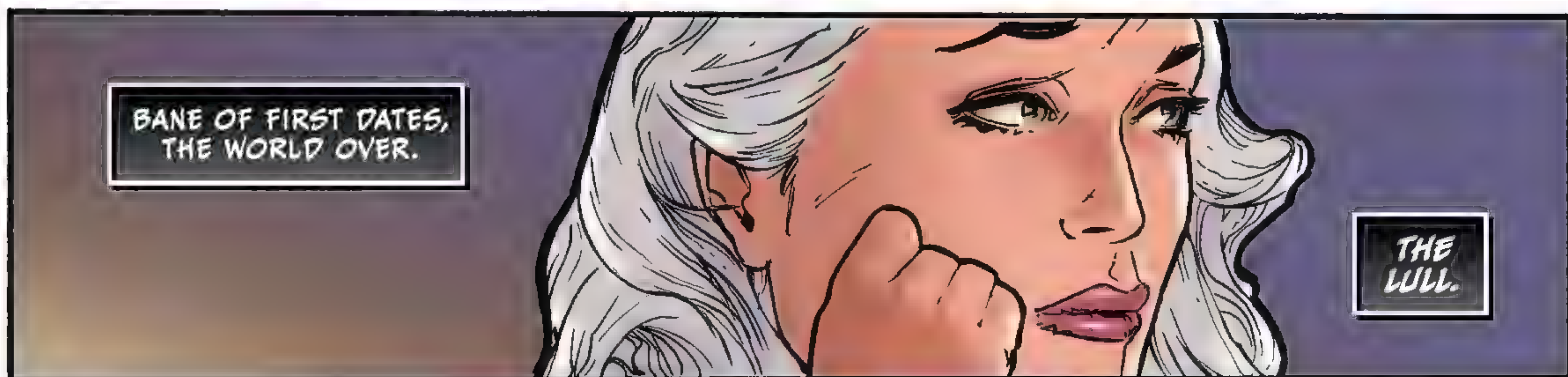
"AND THOSE
AREN'T THE RULES
OUR WORLD IS
GOVERNED BY."



"YOU LIVE FOR
COMPETITION.
I LIVE FOR
EXCITEMENT."

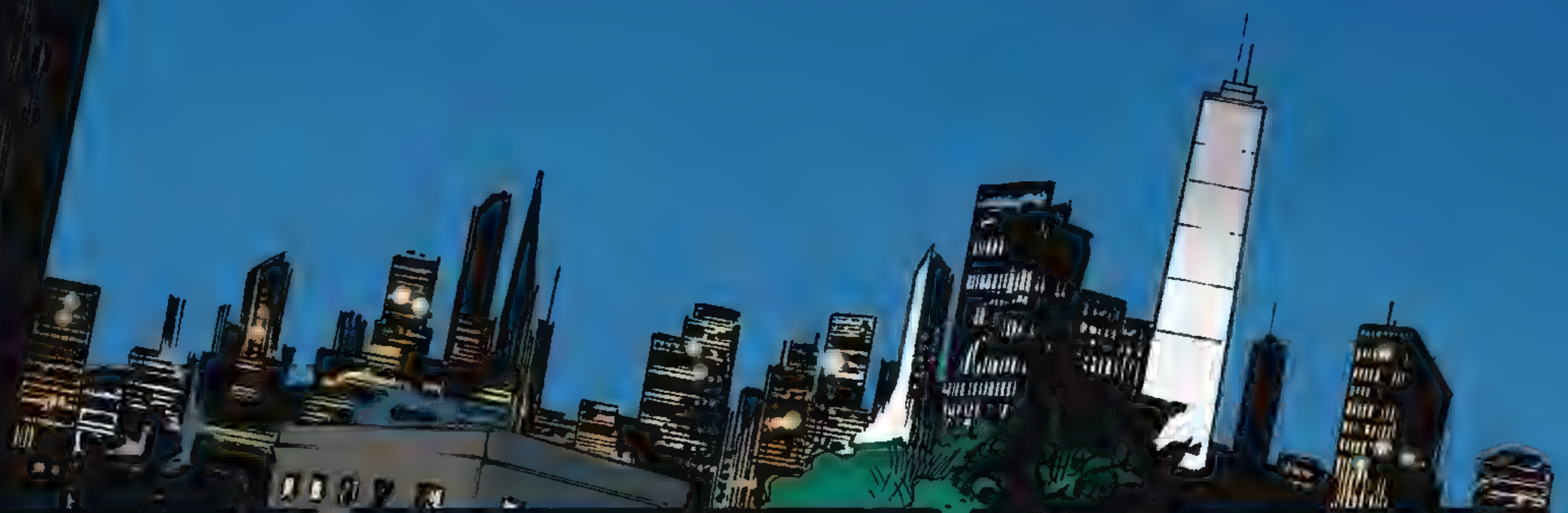
"WE FOLLOW OUR
DESIRES, AND THAT MAY
NOT MAKE US NOBLE..."

"...BUT AT LEAST
IT MAKES US
HONEST."



"HA!
L'ADDITION,
S'IL VOUS
PLÂÎT!"

"WHAT IS IT
THAT YOU HAVE
YOUR PRETTY
EYE ON?"



"NOTHING IN
PARTICULAR."

"LET'S GET
UP ON THE
ROOFTOPS."

"SOME EASY
PICKINGS."

"FIND US
SOMETHING
TASTY."





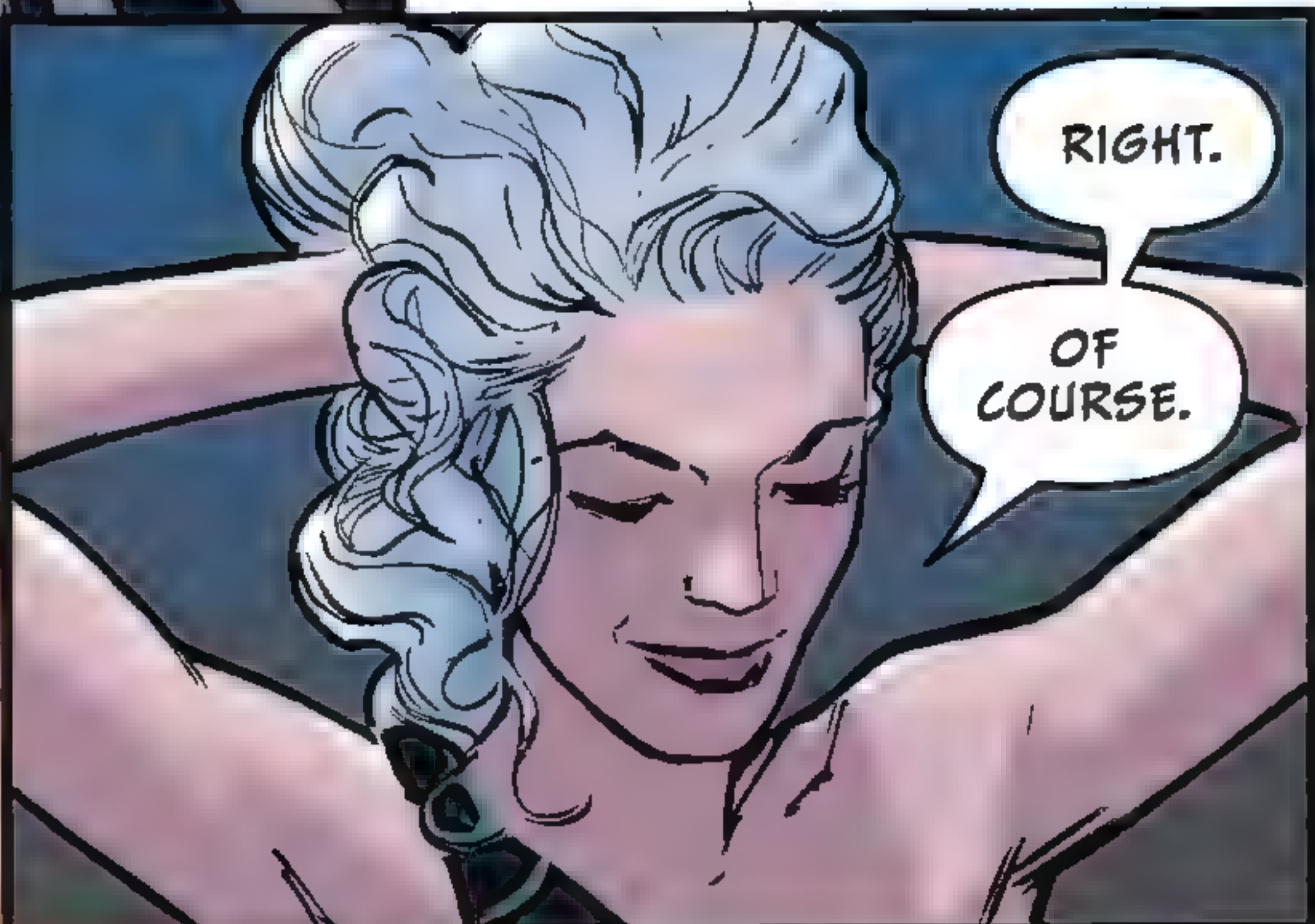
THERE!
COUPLE
BLOCKS AWAY.
PENTHOUSE.

D'ACCORD.



YOU GOOD?
HAVEN'T HAD TOO
MUCH CHAMPAGNE
TO RUN THE
ROOFTOPS?

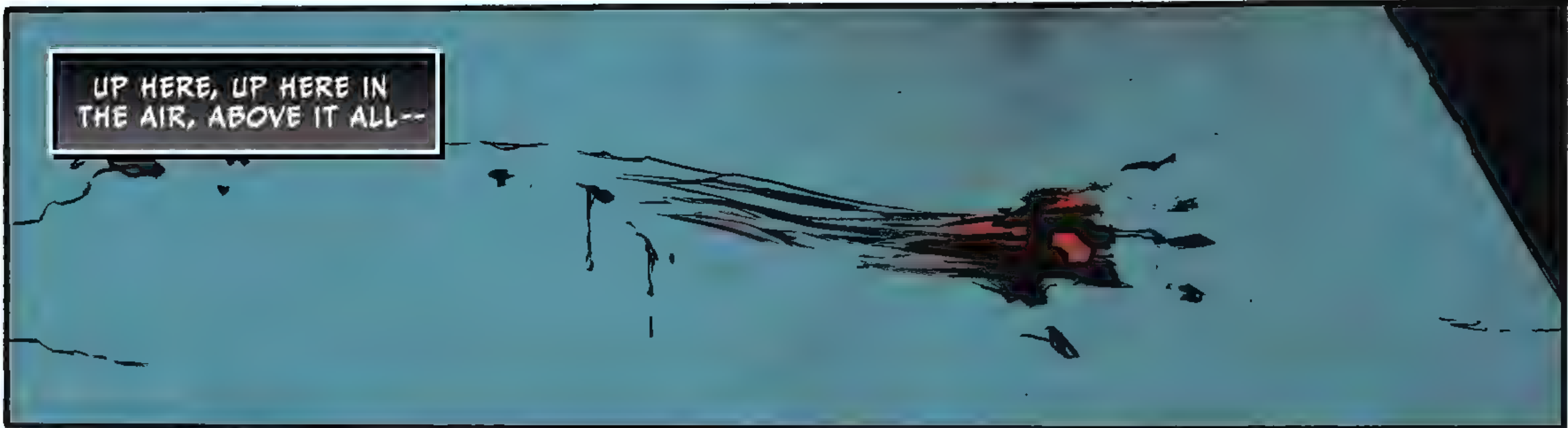
BECAUSE
I *MIGHT*
HAVE.



RIGHT.
OF
COURSE.



LET'S
CRACK THIS
TOWN WIDE
OPEN.



UP HERE, UP HERE IN
THE AIR, ABOVE IT ALL--



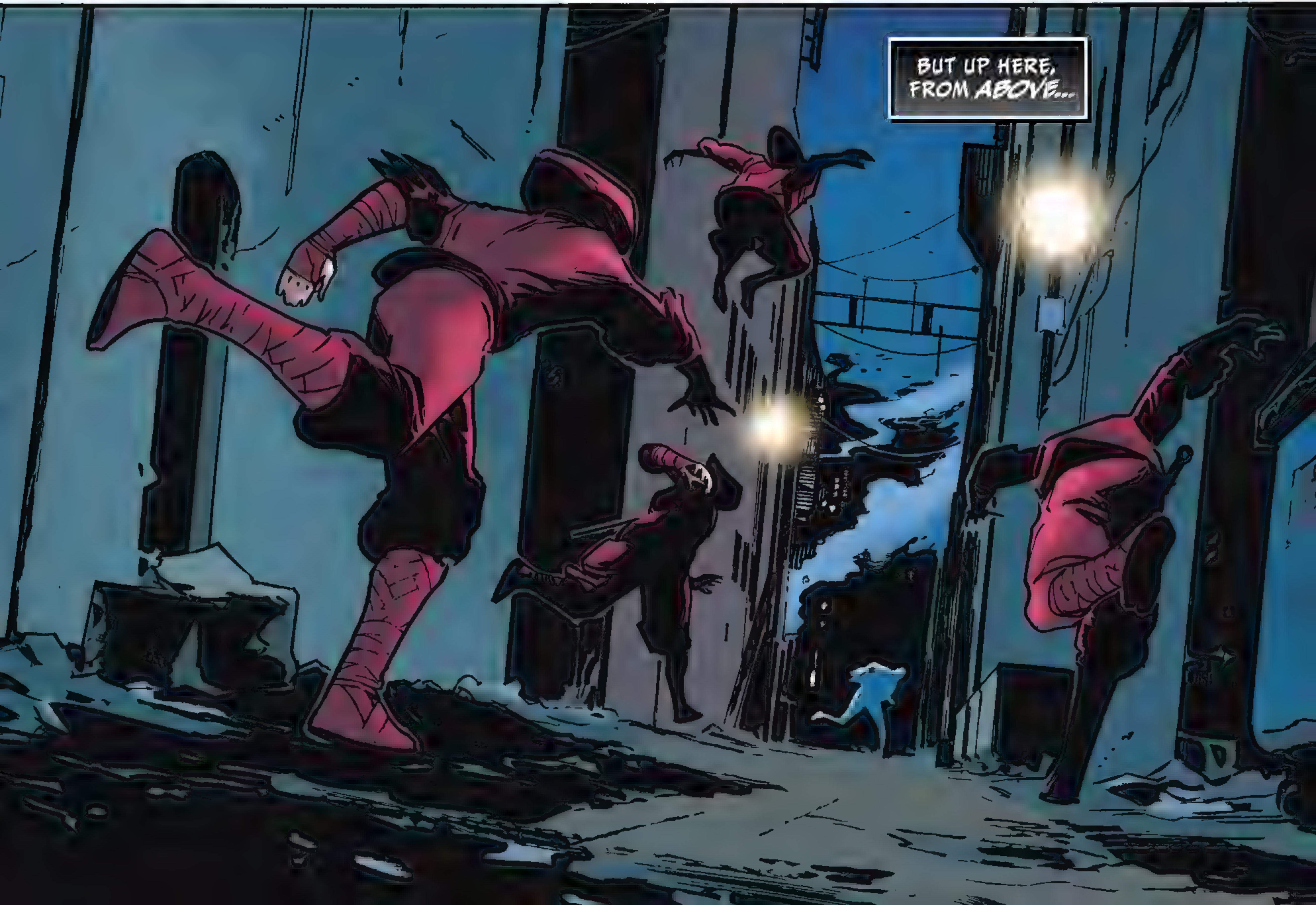
--IT'S
THE *BEST*
THIS CITY
EVER IS.



DOWN THERE, ON
THE STREETS, THE
CITY'S THE USUAL.

BLOOD AND DIRT.

=aya-hunh=
=aya-HUNH=



BUT UP HERE,
FROM ABOVE...



...IT'S ALL
LIGHTS.

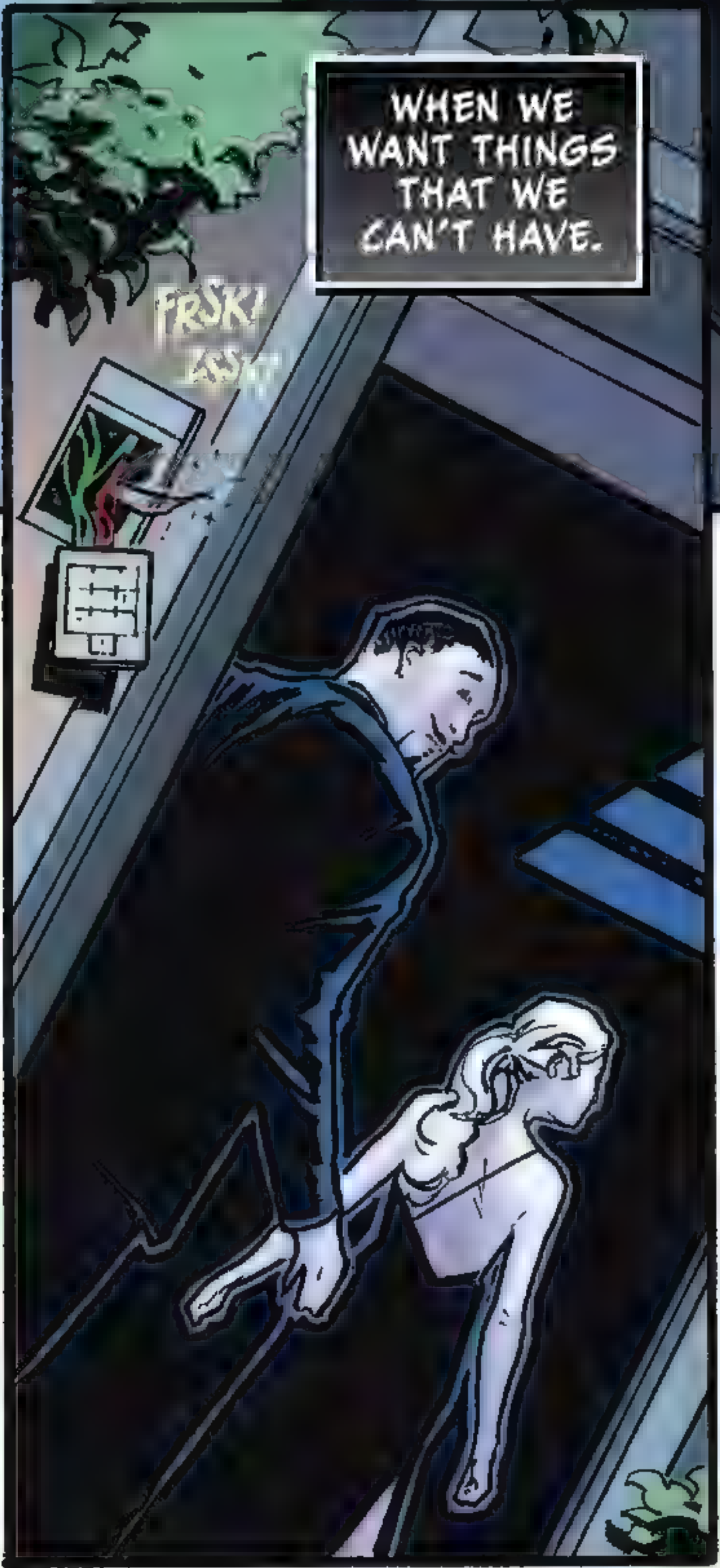
THERE.

WHO LIVES
THERE?

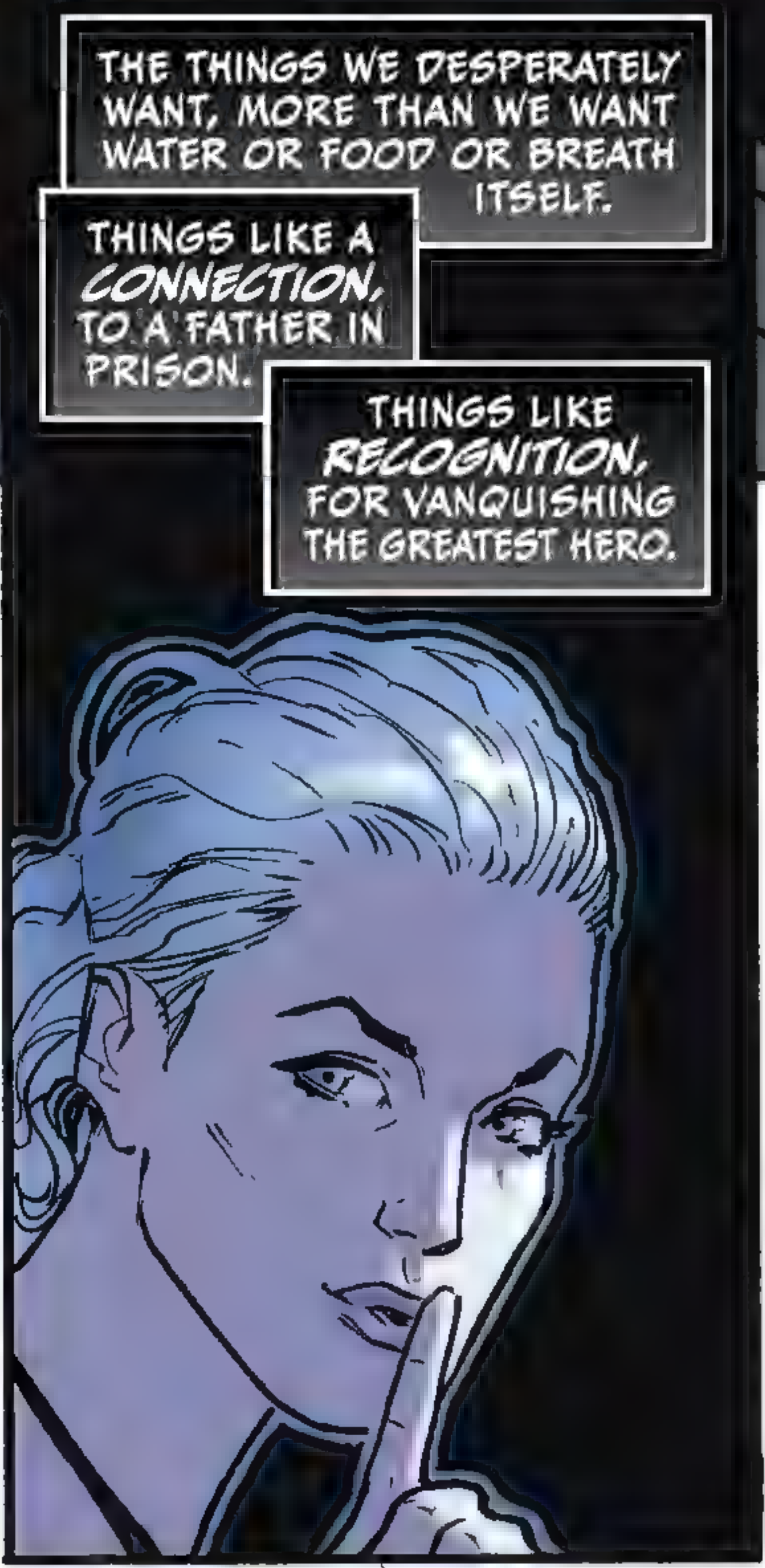
WHO
CARES? THERE'S
GOT TO BE
SOMETHING
GOOD.



BECAUSE THAT'S WHY
WE BECOME THIEVES.



WHEN WE
WANT THINGS
THAT WE
CAN'T HAVE.



THE THINGS WE DESPERATELY
WANT, MORE THAN WE WANT
WATER OR FOOD OR BREATH
ITSELF.

THINGS LIKE A
CONNECTION,
TO A FATHER IN
PRISON.

THINGS LIKE
RECOGNITION,
FOR VANQUISHING
THE GREATEST HERO.

THINGS LIKE A LIFE
LIVED ON ONE'S
OWN TERMS.



LIKE
EXCITEMENT.



LIKE FREEDOM.

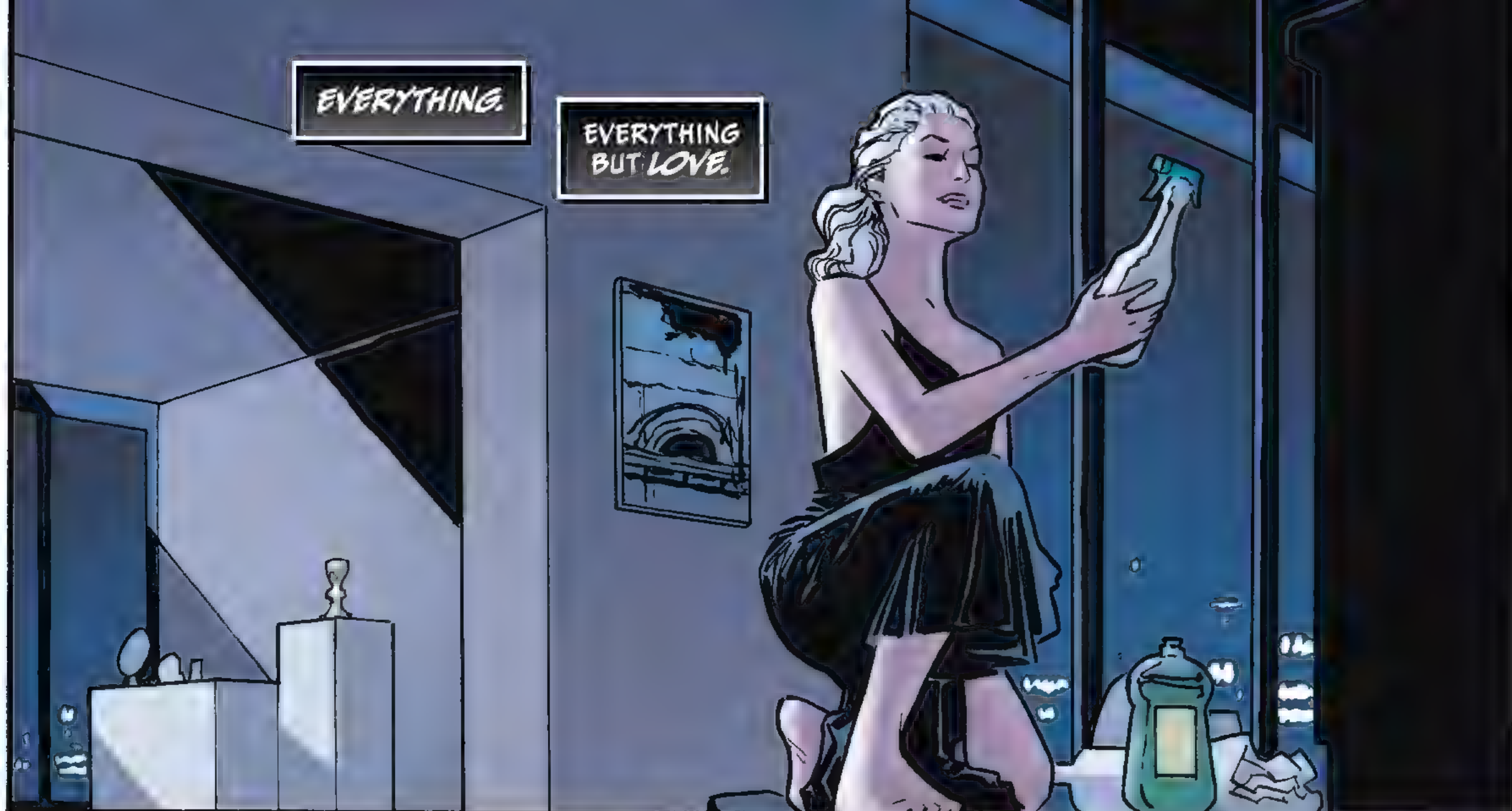
WHUMP!



THINGS WORTH
FIGHTING FOR.
THINGS WORTH
STEALING.

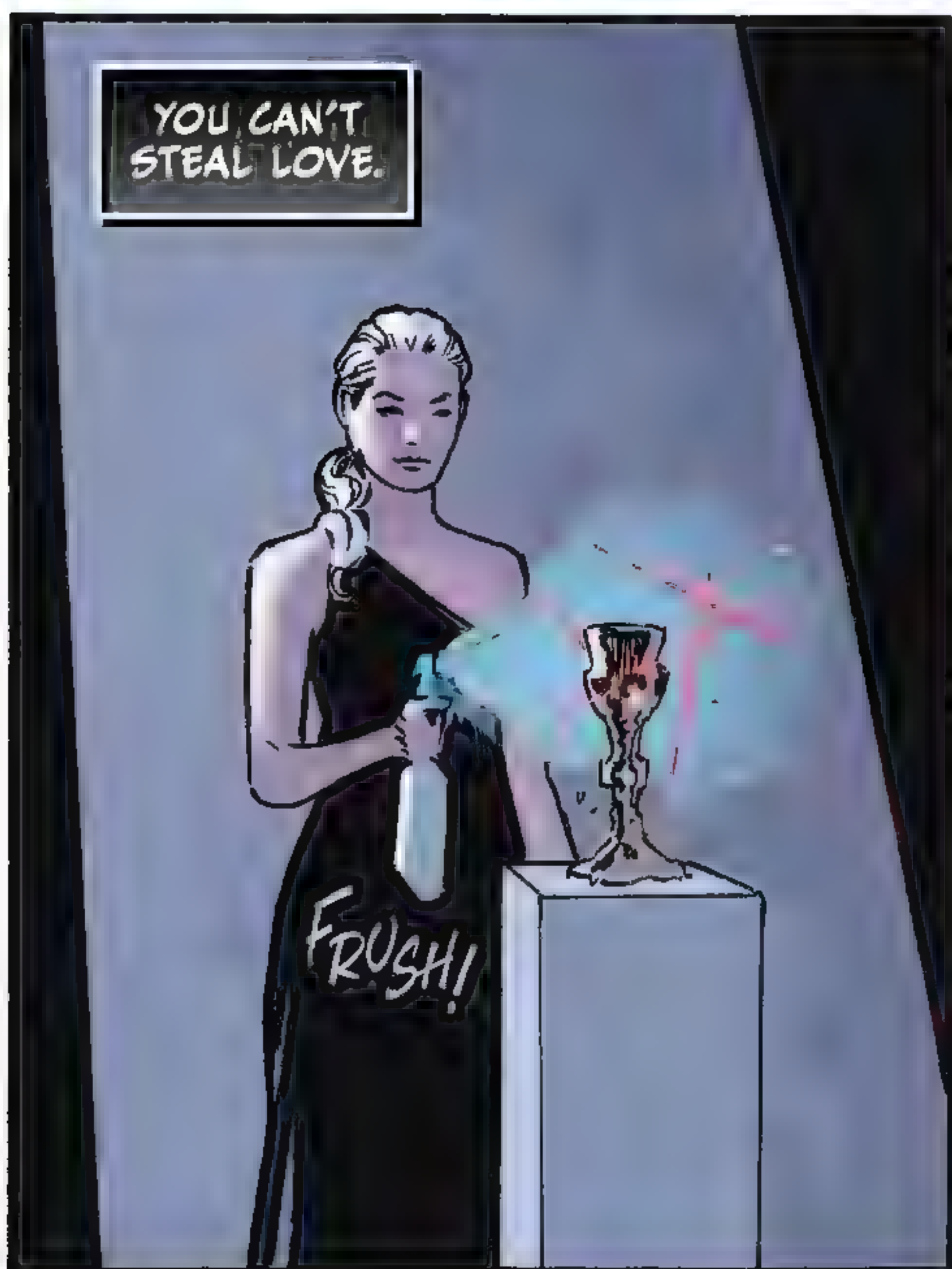
GRAAARR!





EVERYTHING.

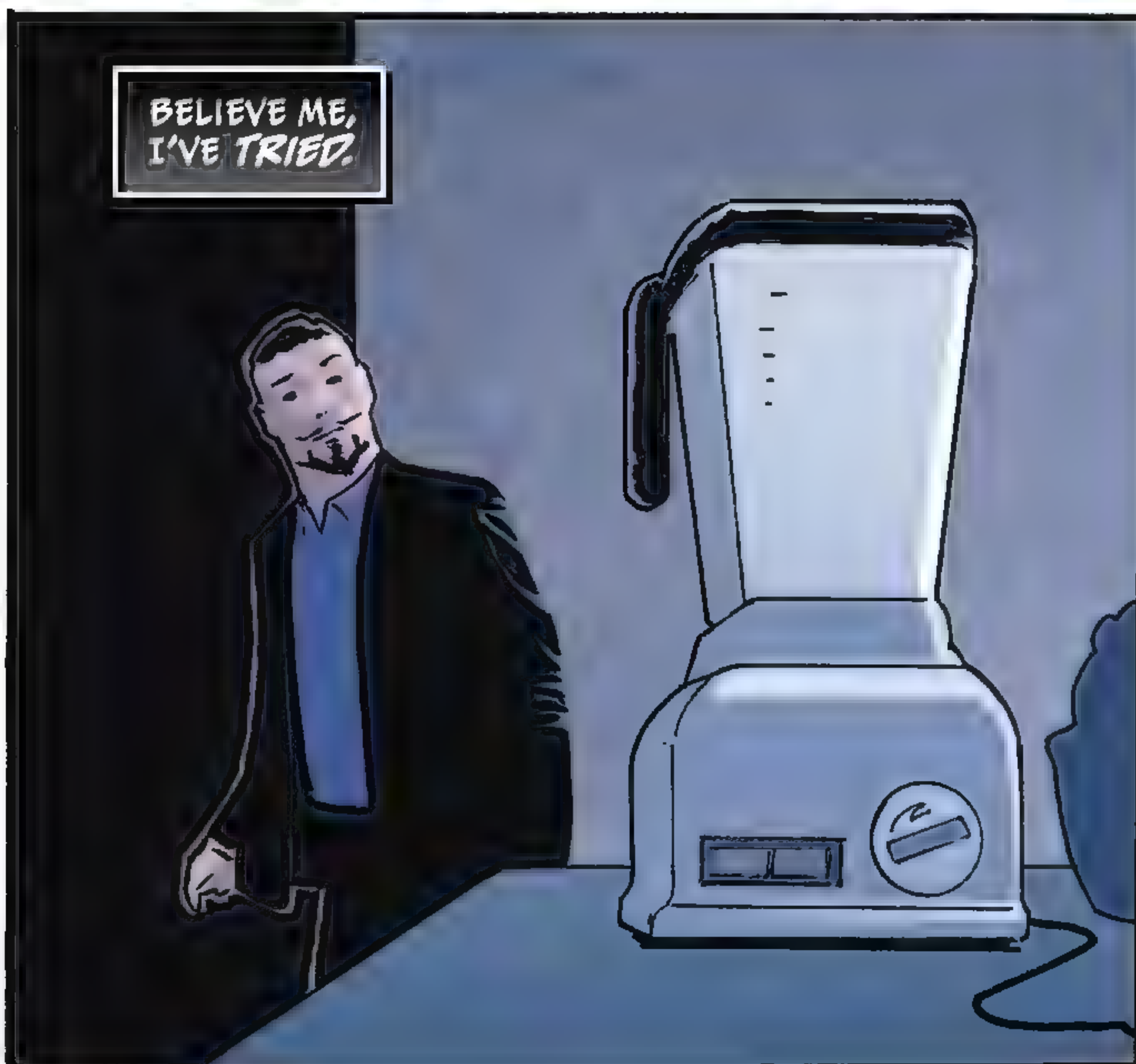
EVERYTHING
BUT LOVE.



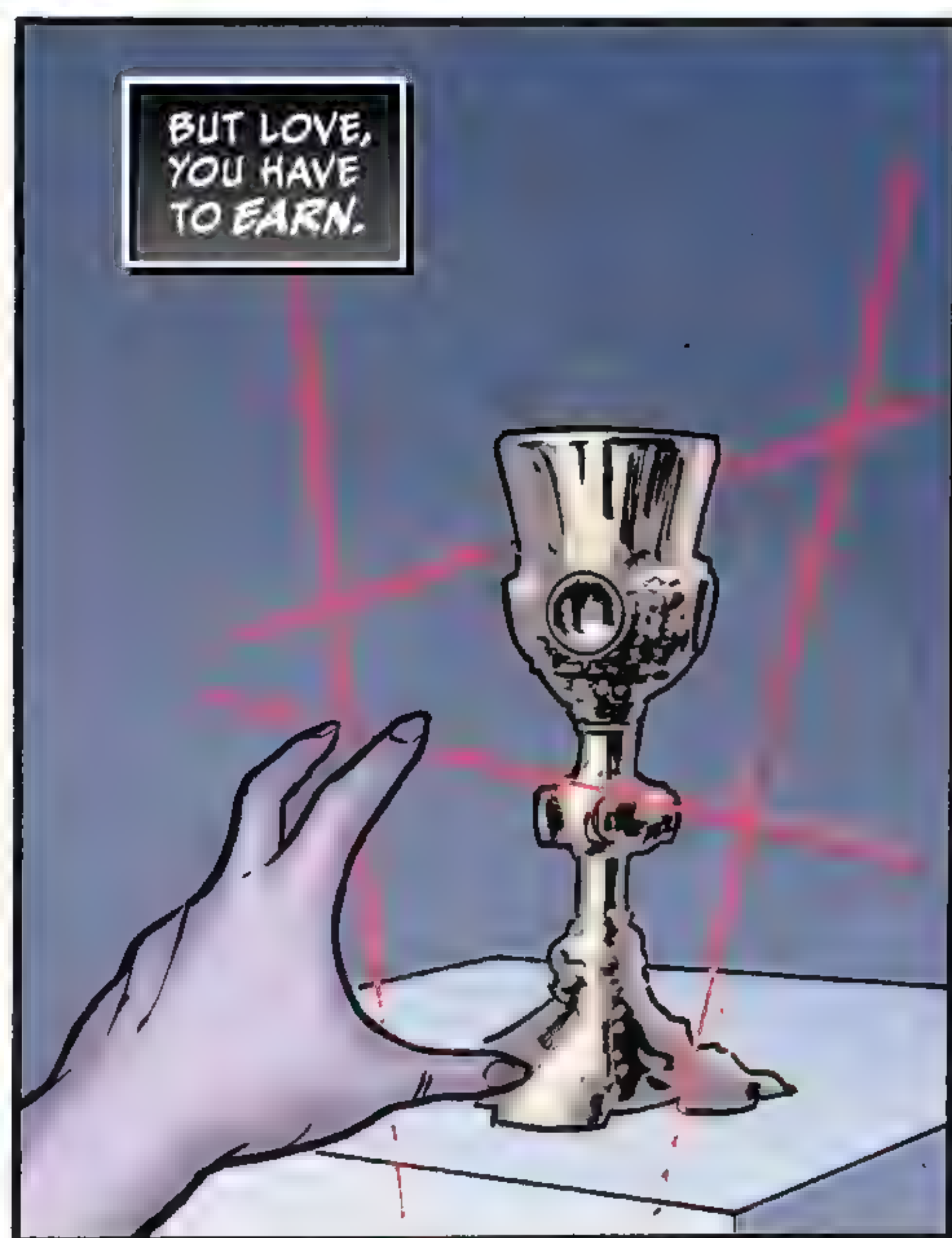
YOU CAN'T
STEAL LOVE.



NO MATTER HOW
MUCH YOU WANT IT.



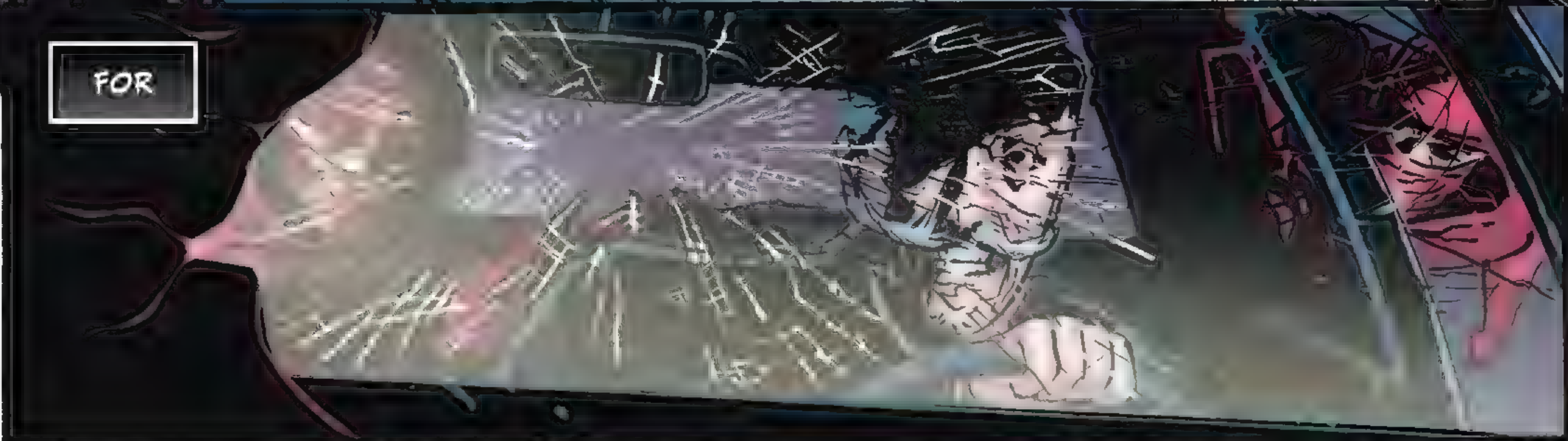
BELIEVE ME,
I'VE TRIED.



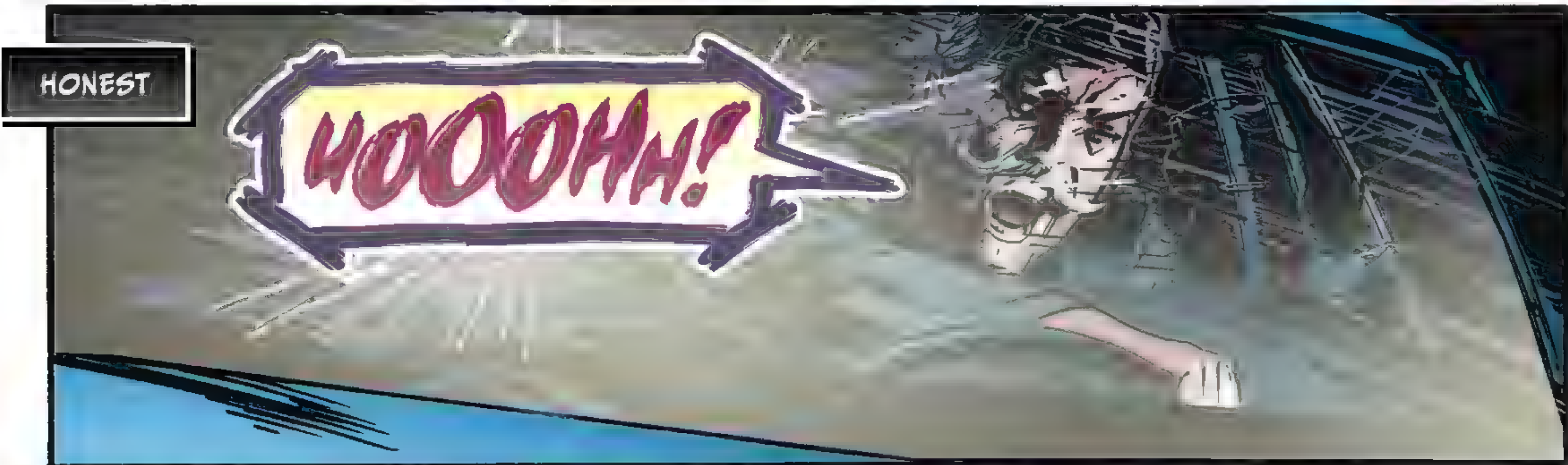
BUT LOVE,
YOU HAVE
TO EARN.



AND I'VE
NEVER BEEN
MUCH



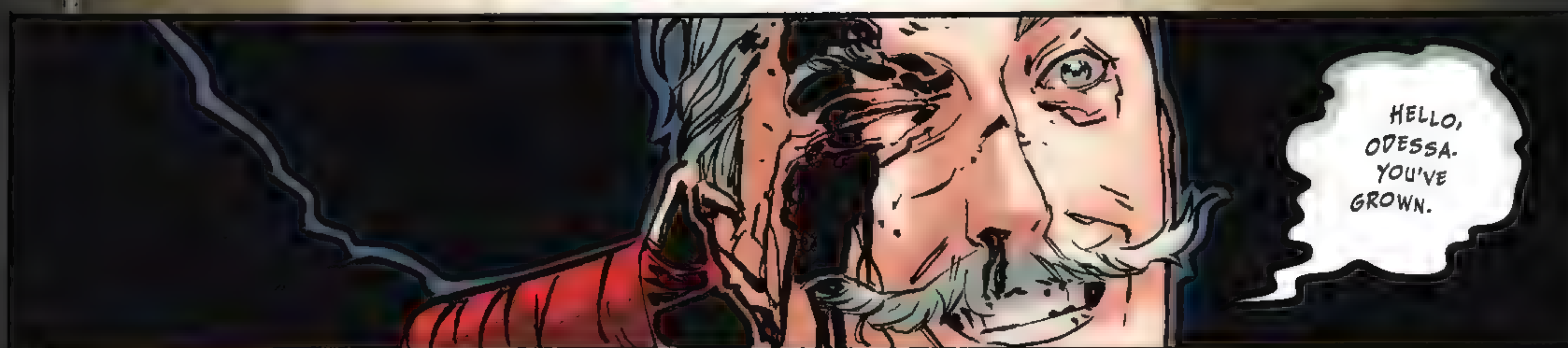
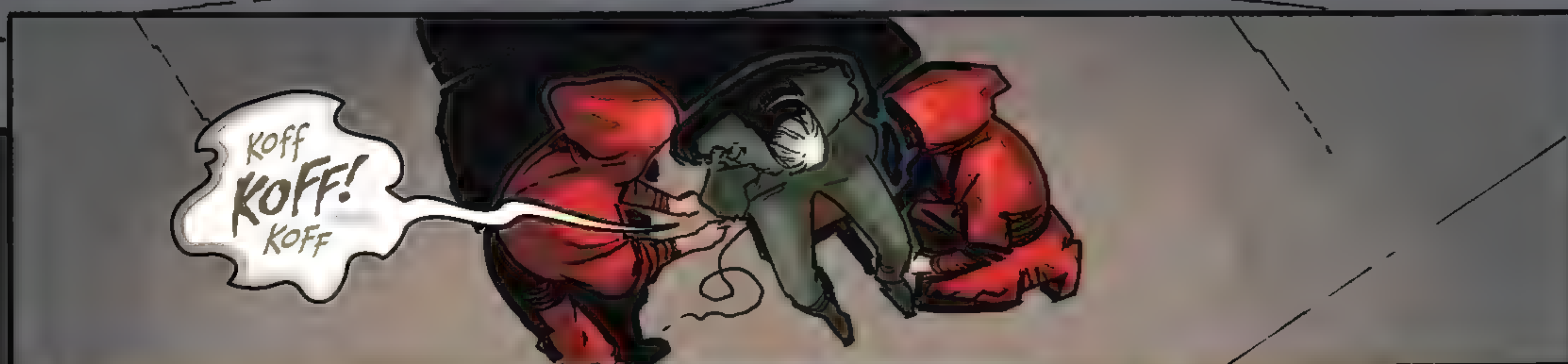
FOR

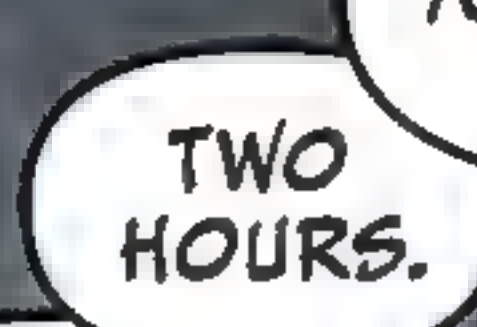
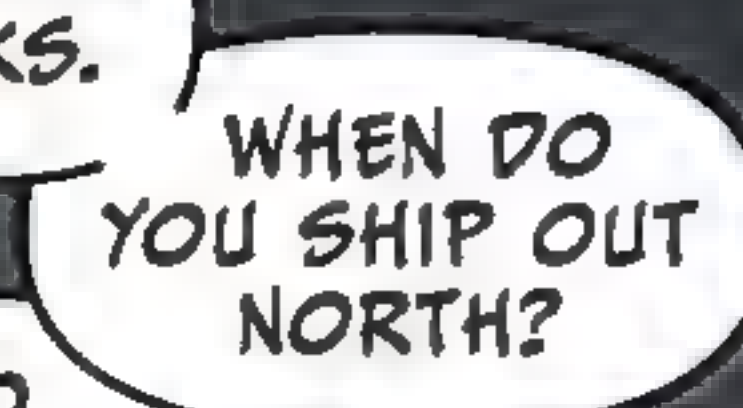
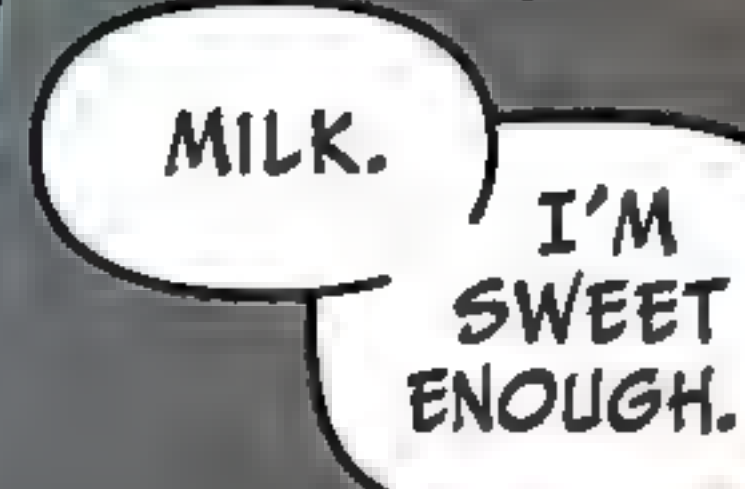
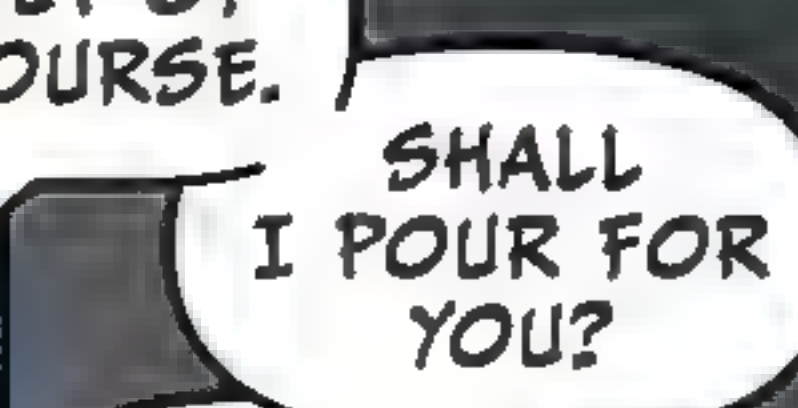
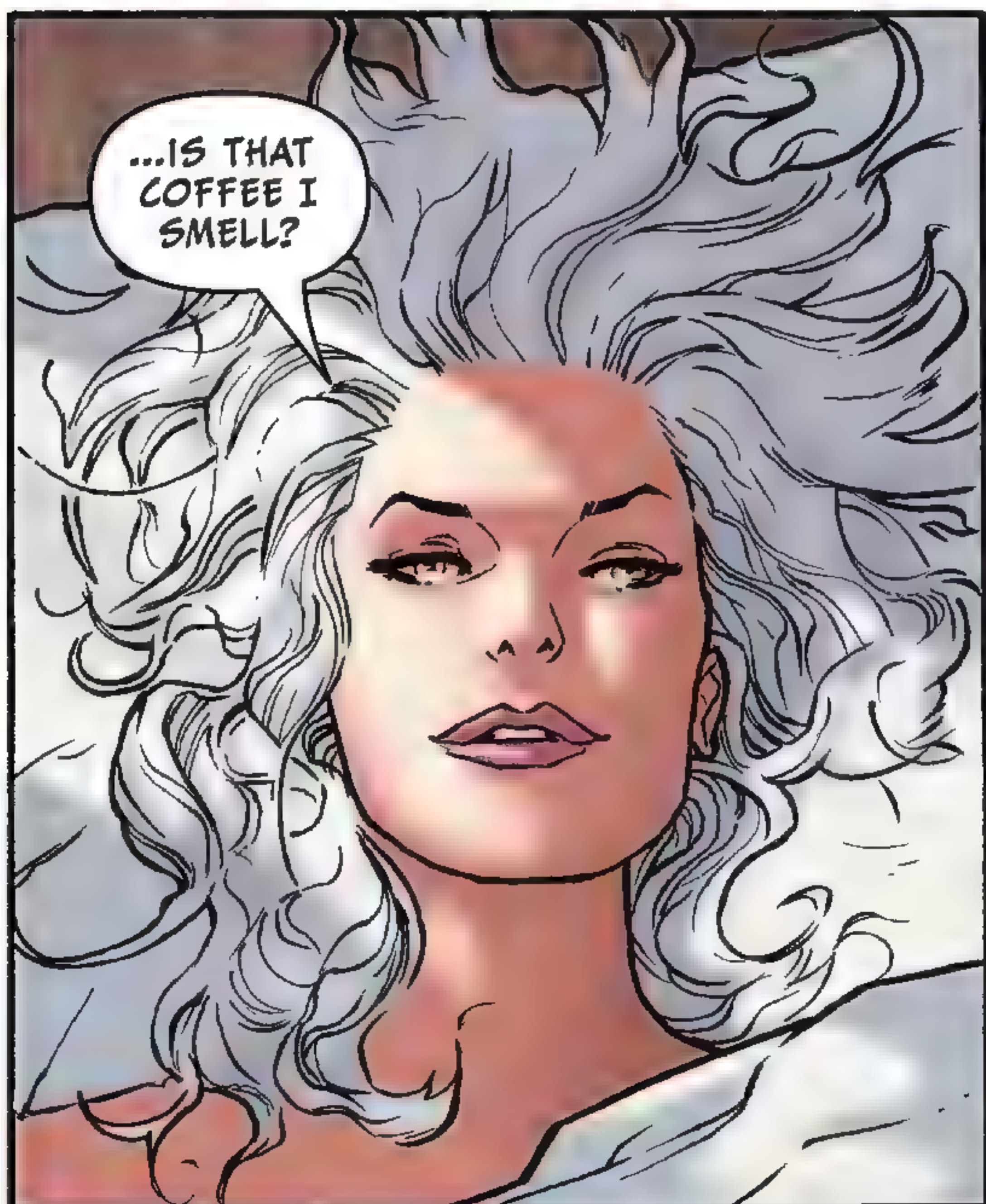
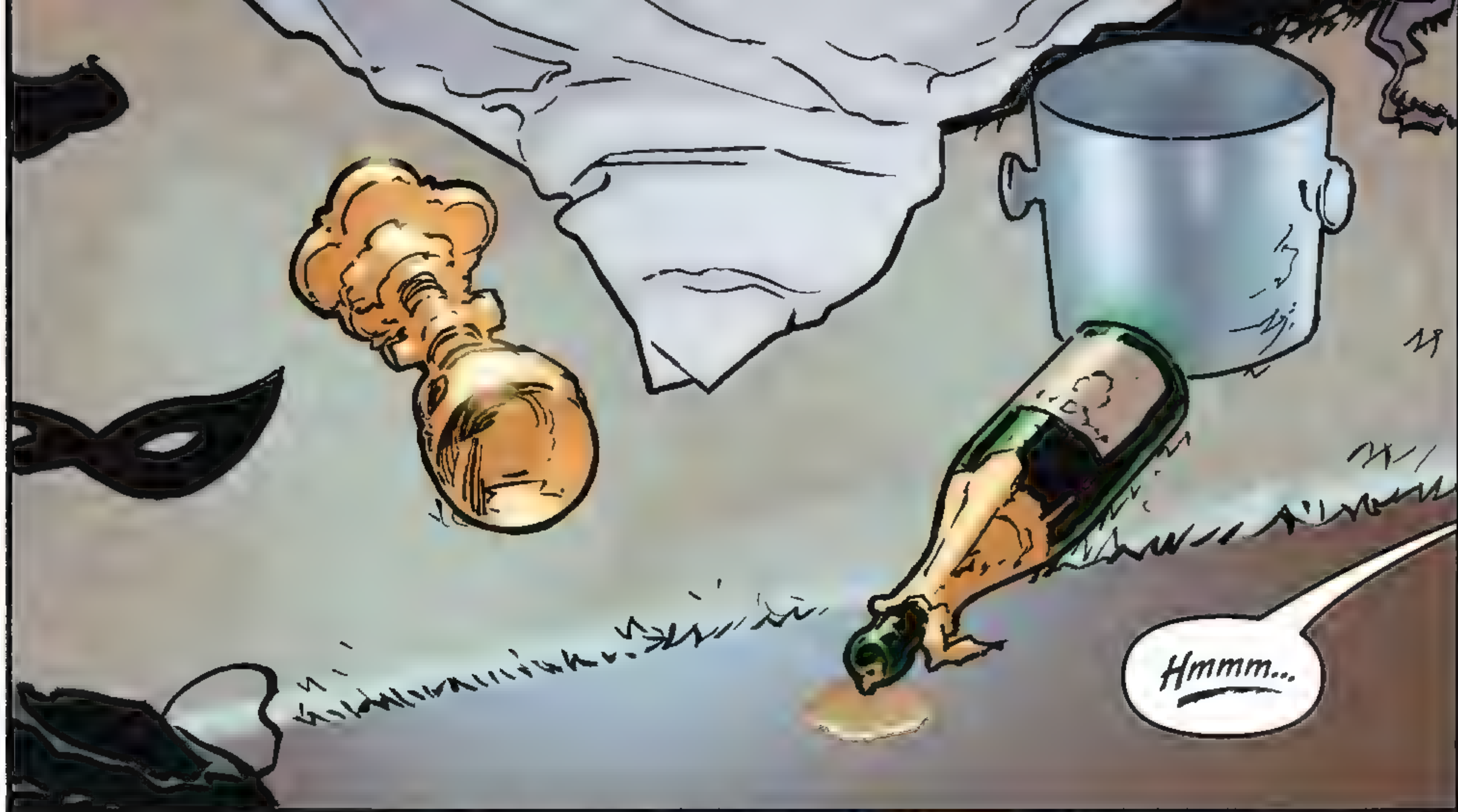


HONEST



WORK.





WE DON'T TALK
ABOUT MEETING
AGAIN.



I'M A THIEF,
HE'S A MERCENARY.
IT'S FINE.

A LITTLE SAD.
BUT FINE.

WE'RE ADULTS.

♪
HE BUYS A GUN.
HE STEALS A CAR
♪



BIT
EARLY,
ISN'T
IT?



SLOW
DOWN,
BRUNO!



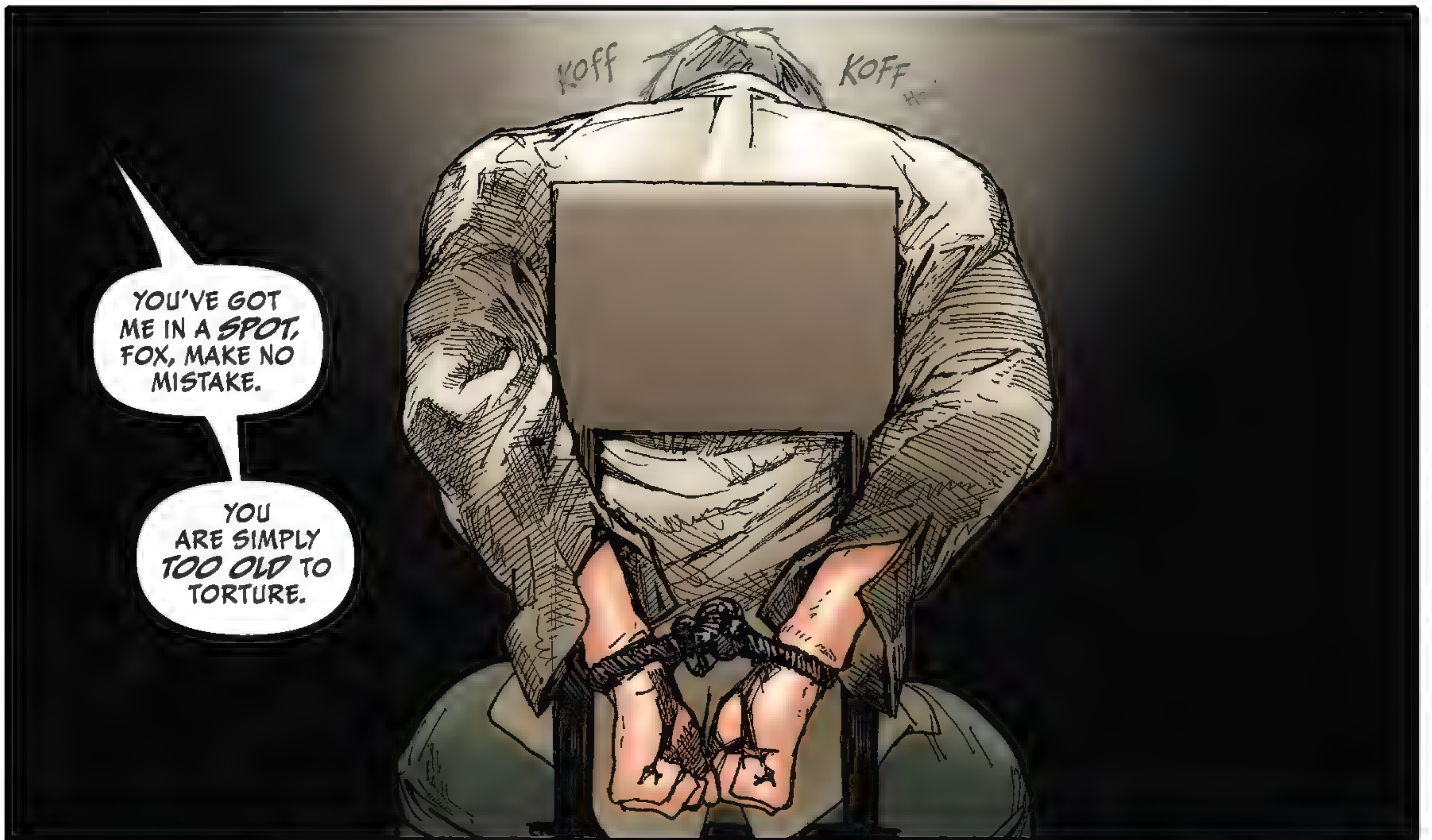
WHO
HAS THE
FOX?!





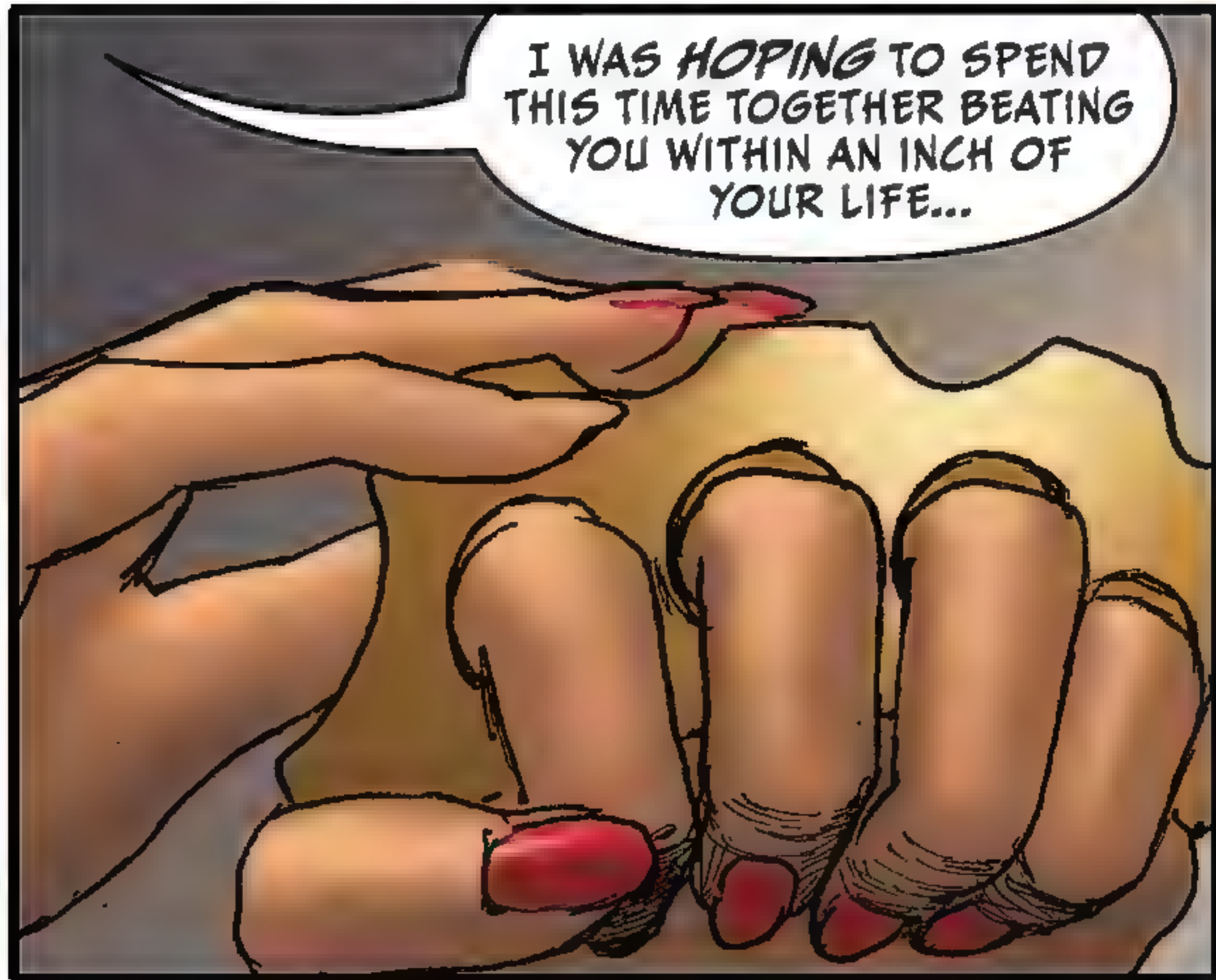
THE BLACK CAT



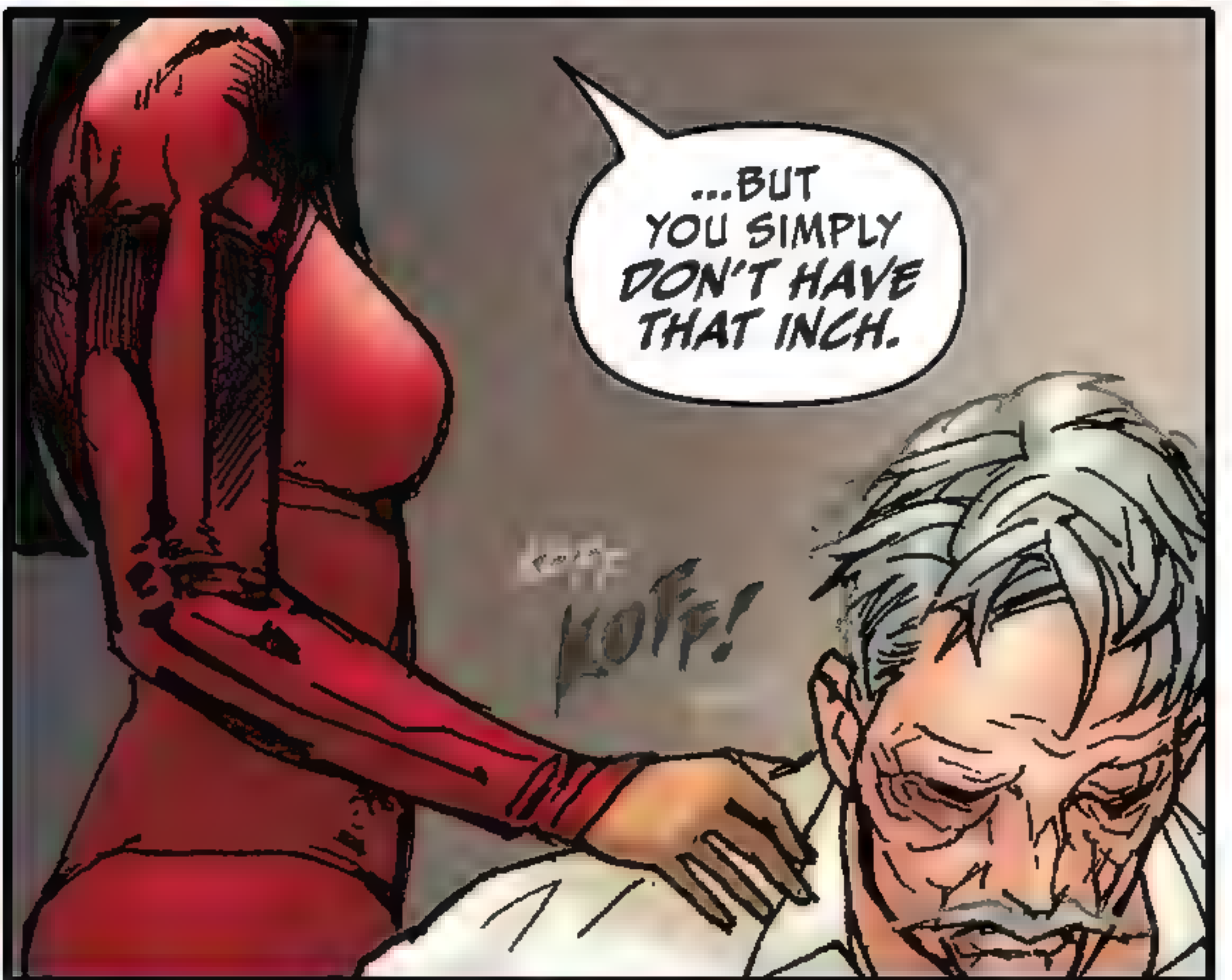


YOU'VE GOT ME IN A *SPOT*, FOX, MAKE NO MISTAKE.

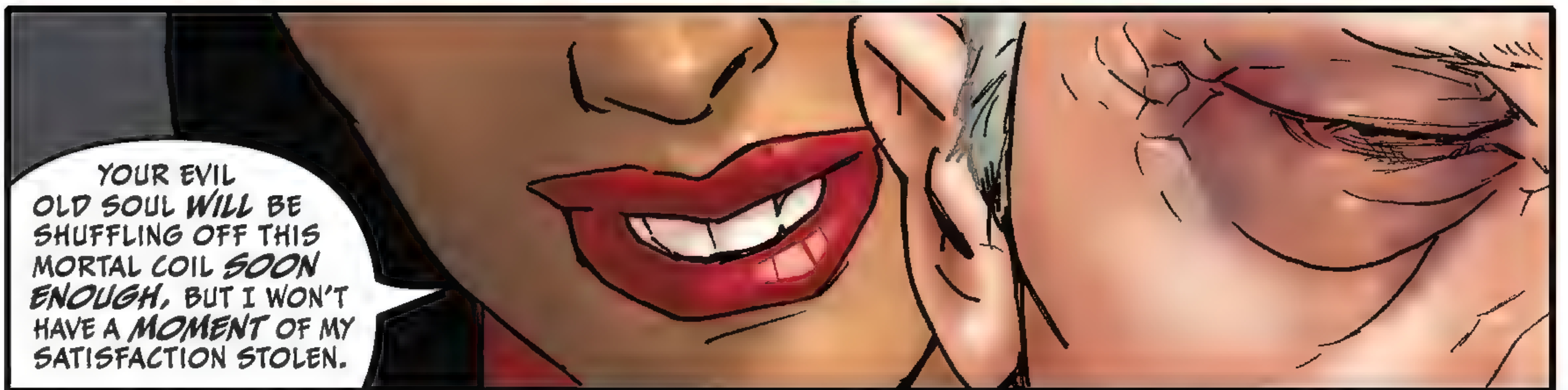
YOU ARE SIMPLY *TOO OLD* TO TORTURE.



I WAS *HOPING* TO SPEND THIS TIME TOGETHER BEATING YOU WITHIN AN INCH OF YOUR LIFE...



...BUT YOU SIMPLY *DON'T HAVE* THAT INCH.



YOUR EVIL OLD SOUL *WILL BE* SHUFFLING OFF THIS MORTAL COIL *SOON ENOUGH*, BUT I WON'T HAVE A *MOMENT* OF MY SATISFACTION STOLEN.



BECAUSE NO ONE *STEALS* FROM ME.



SO PERHAPS
WE SHALL HAVE A
CONVERSATION.

WHY
DO WE
BECOME
THIEVES,
FOX?



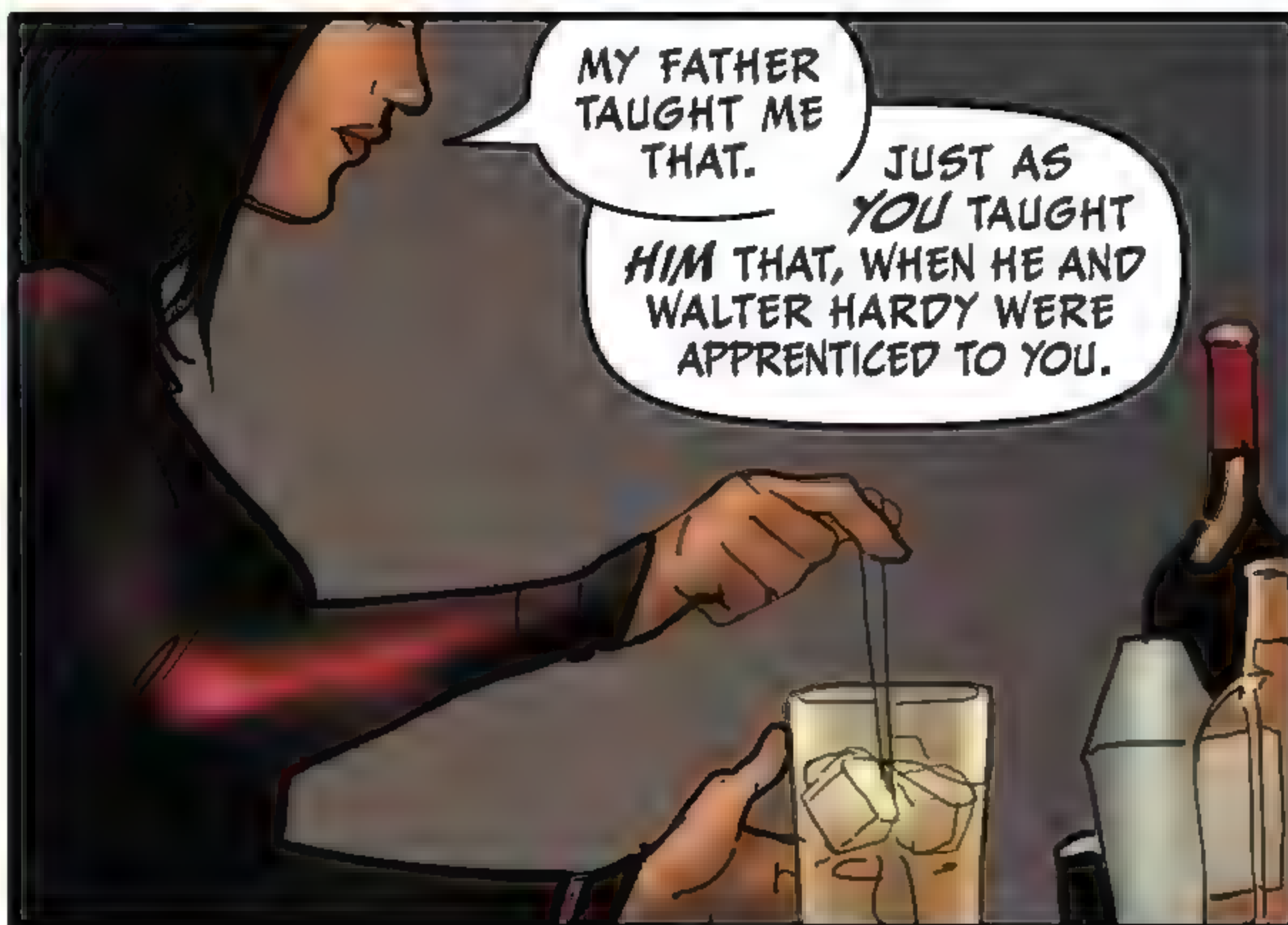
BECAUSE WE WANT
SOMETHING...

...SOMETHING
WE CANNOT
HAVE.



PRECISELY.

AND
SO WE
TAKE
IT.



MY FATHER
TAUGHT ME
THAT.

JUST AS
YOU TAUGHT
HIM THAT, WHEN HE AND
WALTER HARDY WERE
APPRENTICED TO YOU.



IT'S
VERY APT,
ISN'T IT.

THE WANT.
THAT'S
WHAT IT ALL
REVOLVES
AROUND.



"THE THINGS
WE HAVE.

"THE THINGS
WE WANT.

"THAT'S WHERE
WE CAME FROM."



"THOSE WHO
HAD NOTHING,
AND WANTED
EVERYTHING."



"THOSE WHO
WOULD TAKE
WHAT THEY
WANTED."

"THIEVES."



"THEY CAME
TOGETHER WITH
THEIR BROTHERS
AND SISTERS,
FOR *SUPPORT*
AND *SAFETY*."

"SWORE OATHS
OF FRATERNITY
AND LOYALTY WITH
ONE ANOTHER."



BUT
THEY WEREN'T
THE THIEVES
GUILDS YET."

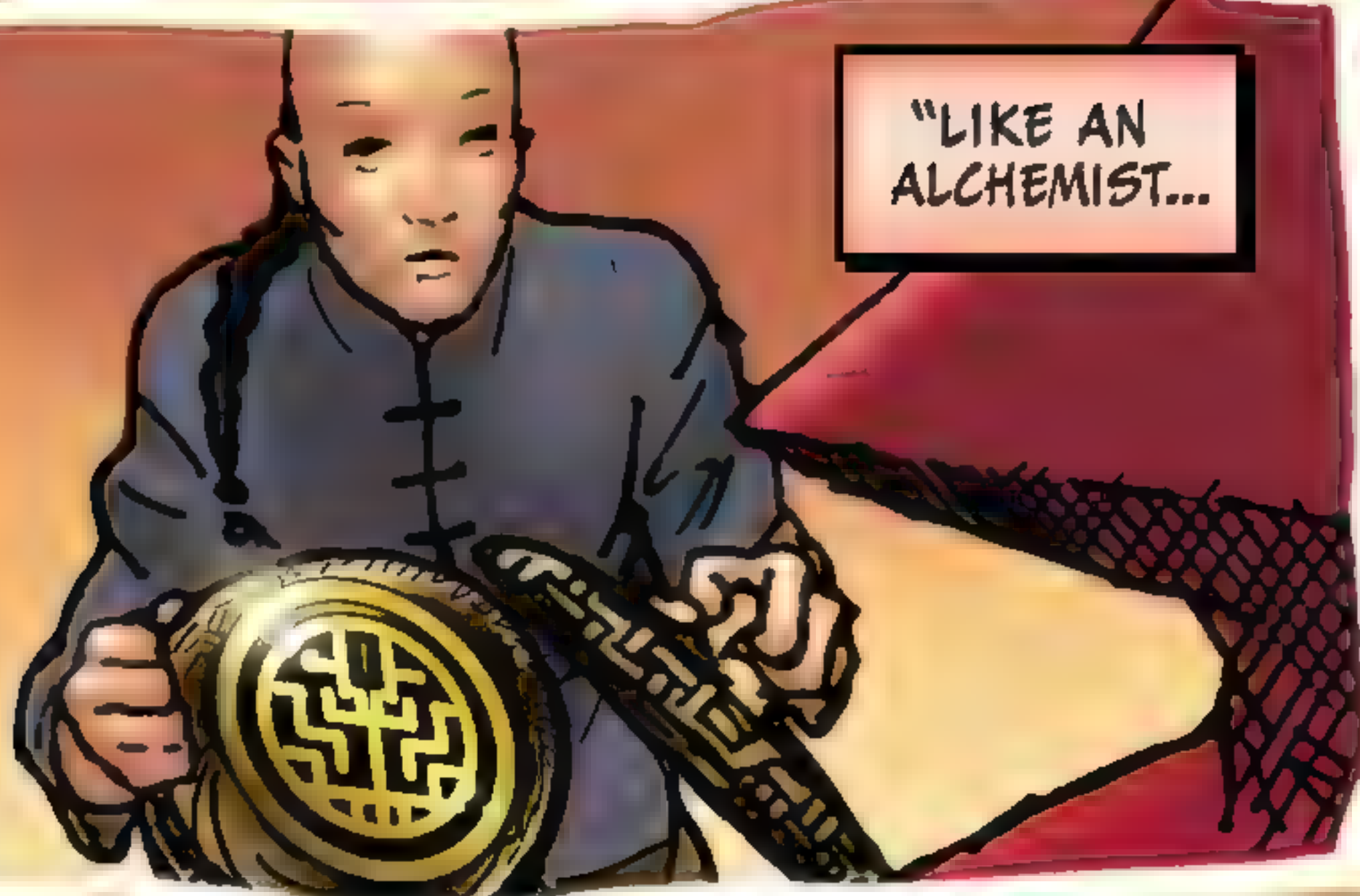
"NO, IT WASN'T UNTIL *SHE* APPEARED, THAT THEY WOULD REACH THEIR *FULL* POTENTIAL.



"AN IMMORTAL GODDESS IN RED, WHO APPROACHED THOSE WHO WANTED WHAT THEY COULDN'T HAVE.



"LIKE AN ALCHEMIST...



"...SHE REFINED THEM FROM THE DROSS THEY WERE...



"...INTO THE GUILDS.

"CANDRA, THE BENEFACTRESS.

"SHE WHO MADE THE ANCIENT COMPACT WITH THE THIEVES GUILDS, OFFERING THEM WHAT THEY TRULY COULD NOT HAVE, WHAT THEY COULD NOT STEAL, NO MATTER THEIR GUILE AND EXPERTISE."



IMMORTALITY.

EXACTLY.



"SHE POSSESSED THE
PHILOSOPHER'S STONE, THE
AAB-E-HAYAT, THE AMRIT RAS.

"THE ELIXIR OF LIFE.

"TO DRINK
OF IT WOULD
CURE ALL ILLS,
WOULD PUT
NEW LIFE INTO
AGED FLESH
AND BONE.

"IN RETURN FOR
THEIR SERVICE,
THEIR OBEISANCE,
CANDRA'S THIEVES
WOULD LIVE
FOREVER.

"THE GUILDS GREW, AND
SPREAD. FROM THE OLD
WORLD, TO THE NEW."

SKRAKASH!

MONTREAL.
BOSTON. NEW
ORLEANS.

NEW YORK.

SHAME
ABOUT
THE NEW
YORK
GUILD.

Mmm...

INDEED.

"THE NEW
YORK GUILD...
OFFENDED THE
BENEFACTRESS.

"AND IN
RETURN...

"THE
NEW YORK
GUILD WAS
DISGRACED.

"CONSIDERED
PARIAHS,
EXCOMMUNICATES
FROM THE
GLOBAL GUILDS
STILL LOYAL
TO CANDRA.

"AND WORST
OF ALL--
MORTAL."

"...SHE
WITHDREW
HER
PATRONAGE.



AND
THE BLAME
WAS PLACED
ON THE
LEADING
FAMILY.

ON THE
ANCESTRAL
KINGS AND
QUEENS
OF THE
NEW YORK
THIEVES.

THE
DRAKES.

BUT THERE
WAS A VERY
CLEVER BOY
AMONG THE
DRAKE HEIRS,
WASN'T
THERE?

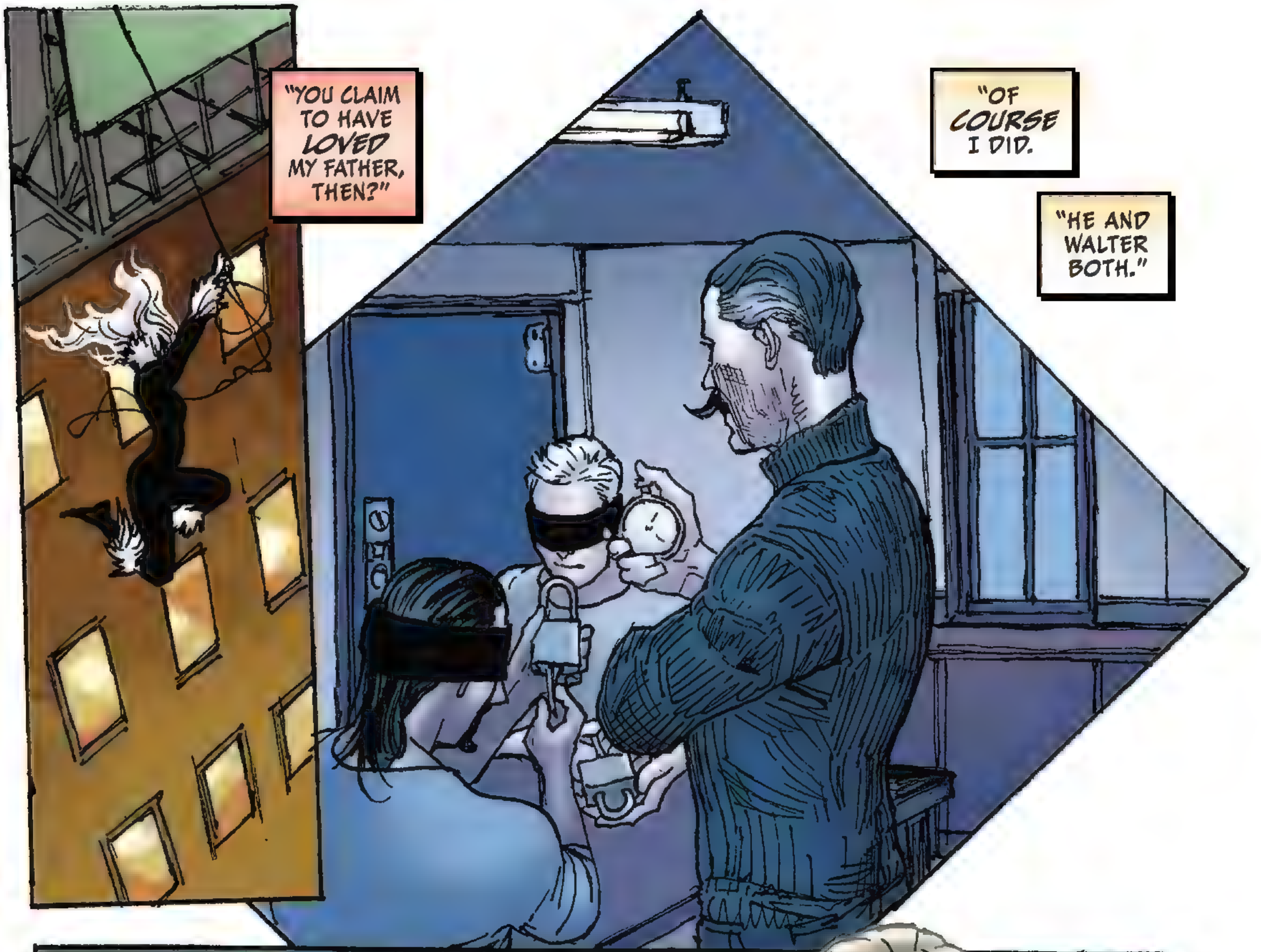
YOUR
FATHER. MY
STUDENT.

"CASTILLO
DRAKE.

"AND
WALTER
HARDY.

"A PRINCE OF
THIEVES AND A
PAUPER'S SON.
MY APPRENTICES.

"MY
SONS."



"YOU CLAIM
TO HAVE
LOVED
MY FATHER,
THEN?"

"OF
COURSE
I DID."

"HE AND
WALTER
BOTH."



HOW
DARE
YOU!



THOSE BOYS
UNDERSTOOD
WHAT IT MEANT
TO BE A THIEF.

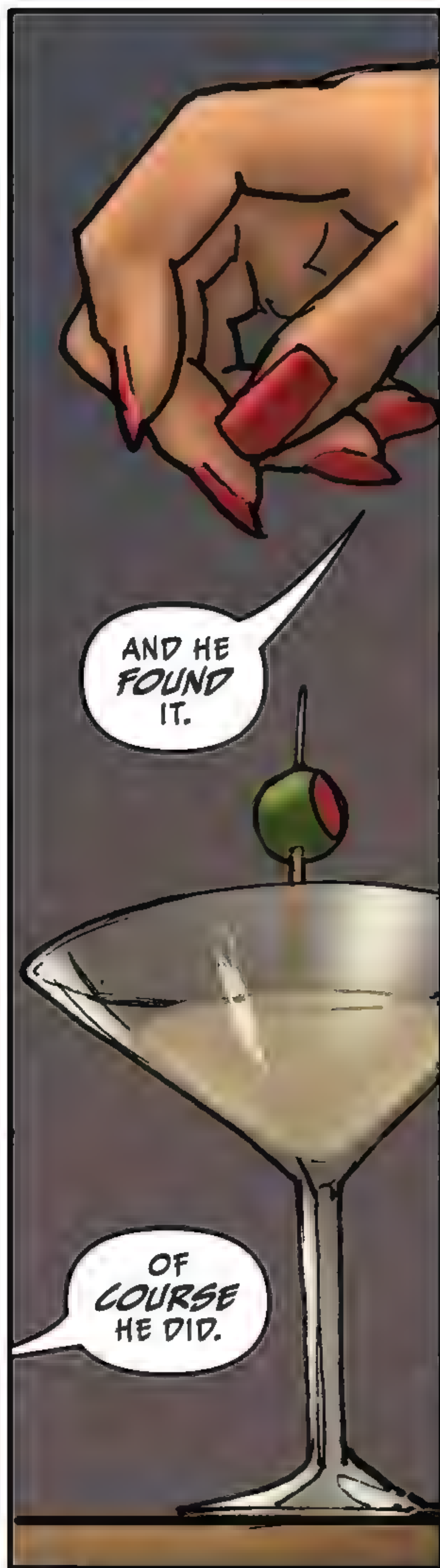
THE
WANTING.

"CASTILLO
BEST OF ALL."

"HE WANTED MORE
THAN WALTER,
MORE THAN I."

"A WAY
TO SEE
HIS FAMILY
RESTORED.
HIS GUILD
BROUGHT
BACK TO
PROMINENCE."





AND HE
FOUND
IT.

OF
COURSE
HE DID.



"HE WAS
TRAINED BY
THE *BEST*."

WRAH!



NO.

HE WAS
THE BEST.
MY FATHER
ECLIPSED
YOU, FOX.



"THAT WAS WHY
HE LEFT YOU.

"HE HAD FOUND
WHAT HE WANTED.



"IF THE *BENEFACTRESS*
WOULD NOT PROVIDE
THE NEW YORK GUILD
WITH IMMORTALITY...

"...WELL,
THERE WERE
OTHERS
TO BE
BARGAINED
WITH."

"BUT YOU
KNEW THAT,
DIDN'T YOU?"

"YEARS LATER, WHEN
YOU FOUND OUT..."

"...YOU CAME
AFTER HIM."

"YOU WERE
IN A RAGE,
CLAIMING
THAT HE HAD
HELD OUT
ON YOU."

"THAT ANYTHING
HE HAD FOUND
WHILE WORKING
FOR YOU..."

"...WAS
YOURS
BY RIGHT."

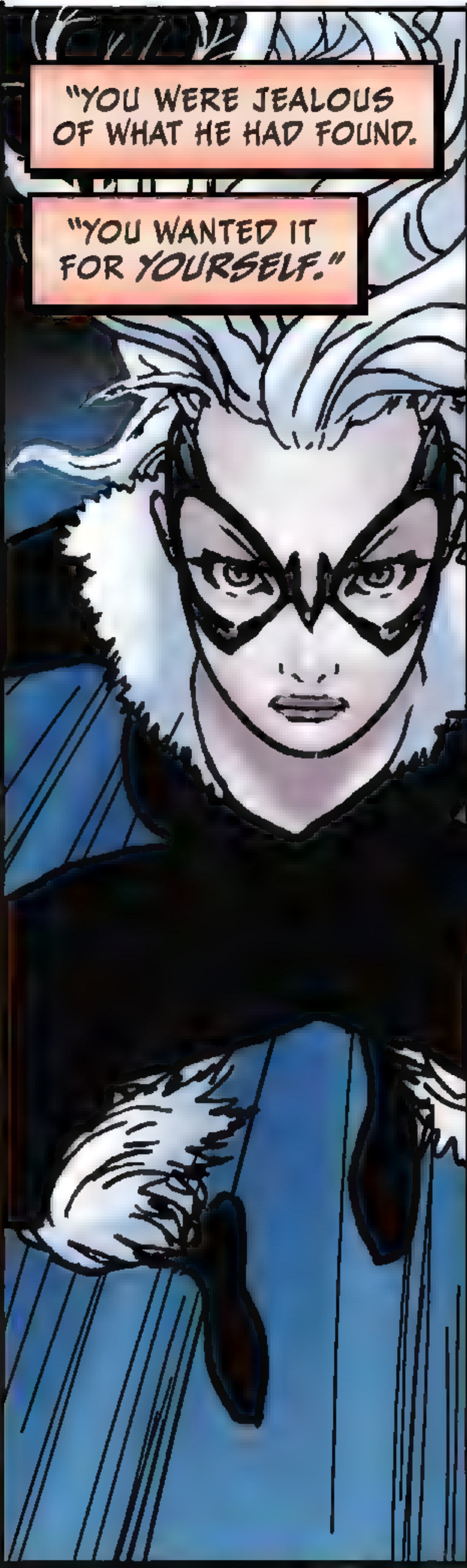
I WAS
AFRAID
FOR HIM.

CASTILLO
WAS PLAYING
WITH FIRE--

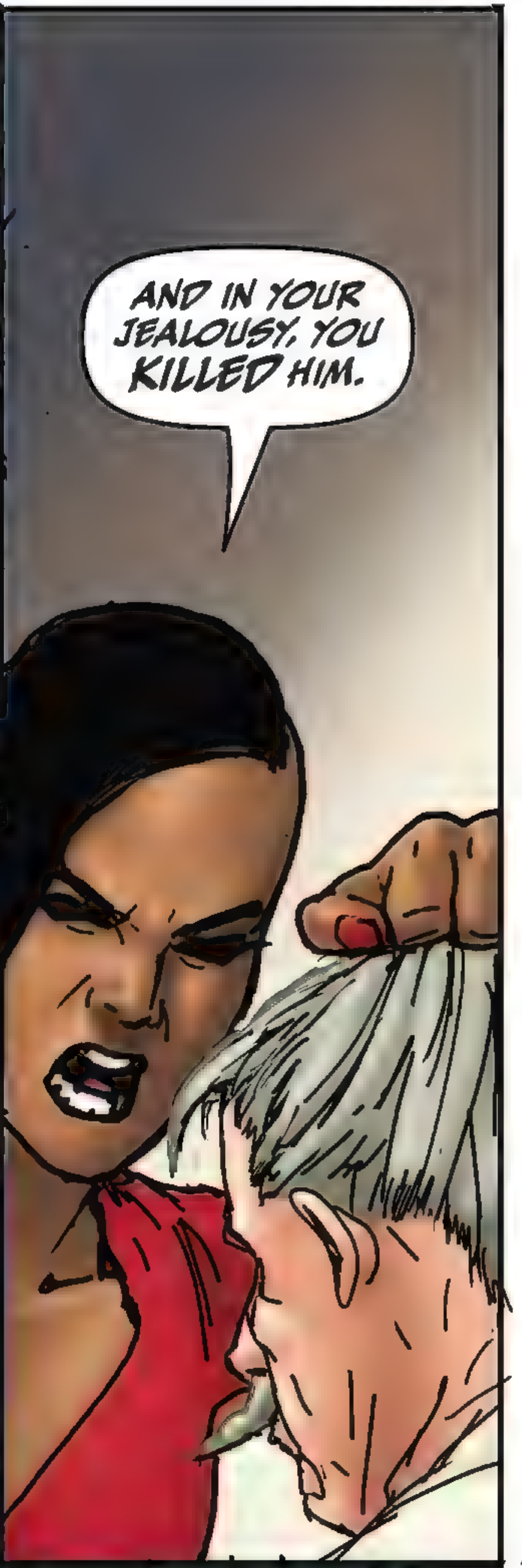
--IT WAS TOO
DANGEROUS--



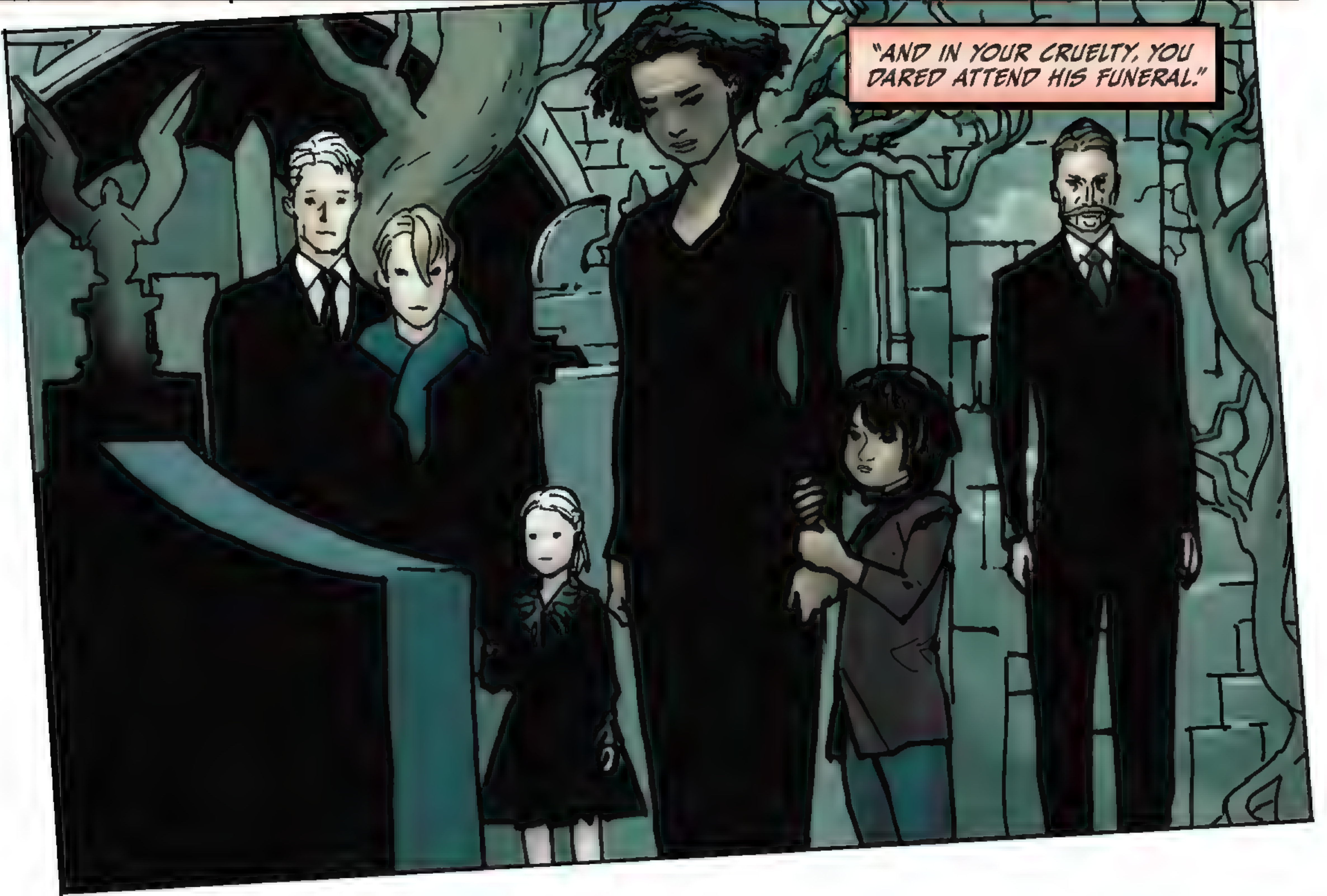
DO
NOT
LIE
TO
ME!



"YOU WERE JEALOUS
OF WHAT HE HAD FOUND."
"YOU WANTED IT
FOR YOURSELF."



AND IN YOUR
JEALOUSY, YOU
KILLED HIM.



"AND IN YOUR CRUELTY, YOU
DARED ATTEND HIS FUNERAL."

"I DIDN'T KILL CASTILLO."

"LIAR!"

HE WAS MURDERED A WEEK AFTER YOU CONFRONTED HIM.

DO YOU THINK ME A FOOL?

"BUT I CONTINUED HIS WORK."

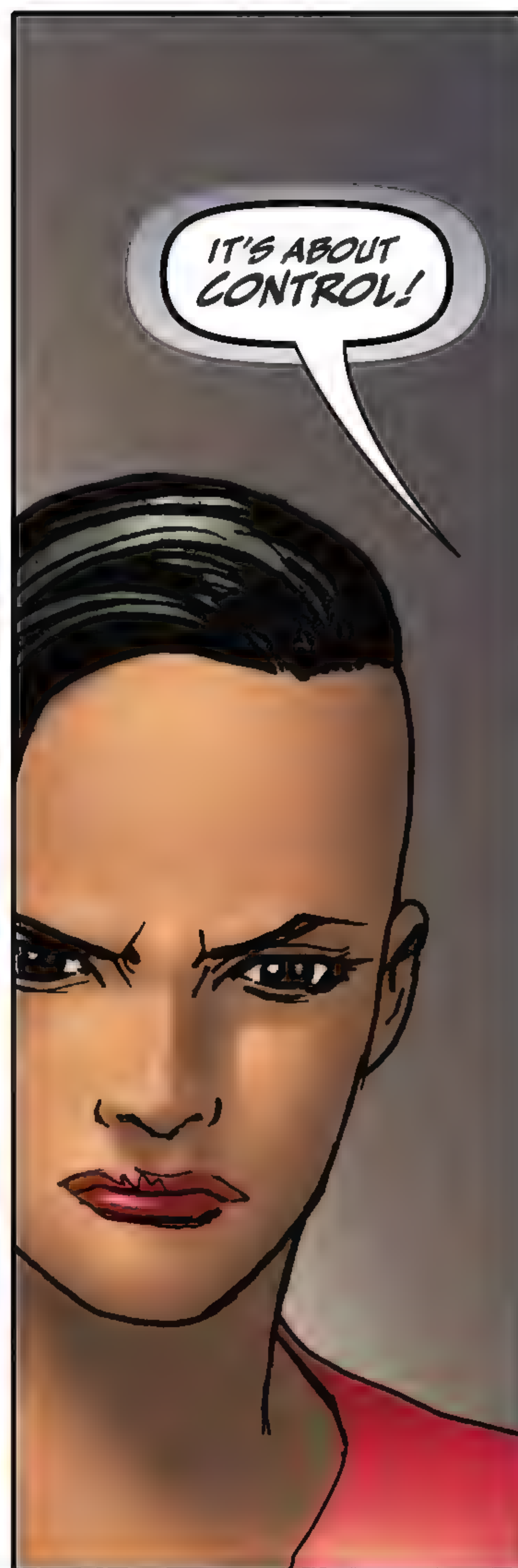
"AND I SUCCEEDED IN DECIPHERING THE SECRETS HE SOUGHT."

"I MADE CONTACT."

"FOR MY GUILD,
FOR MY FAMILY,
FOR MY FATHER..."



"...I MADE
THE DEAL."



"HER."

"FELICIA HARDY.
THE BLACK CAT."

"THE TWO OF YOU.
OF A KIND, BUT
NIGHT AND DAY."

"YOU'RE
JEALOUS,
AREN'T YOU?"

"OF HER
FREEDOM. HER
INDEPENDENCE."

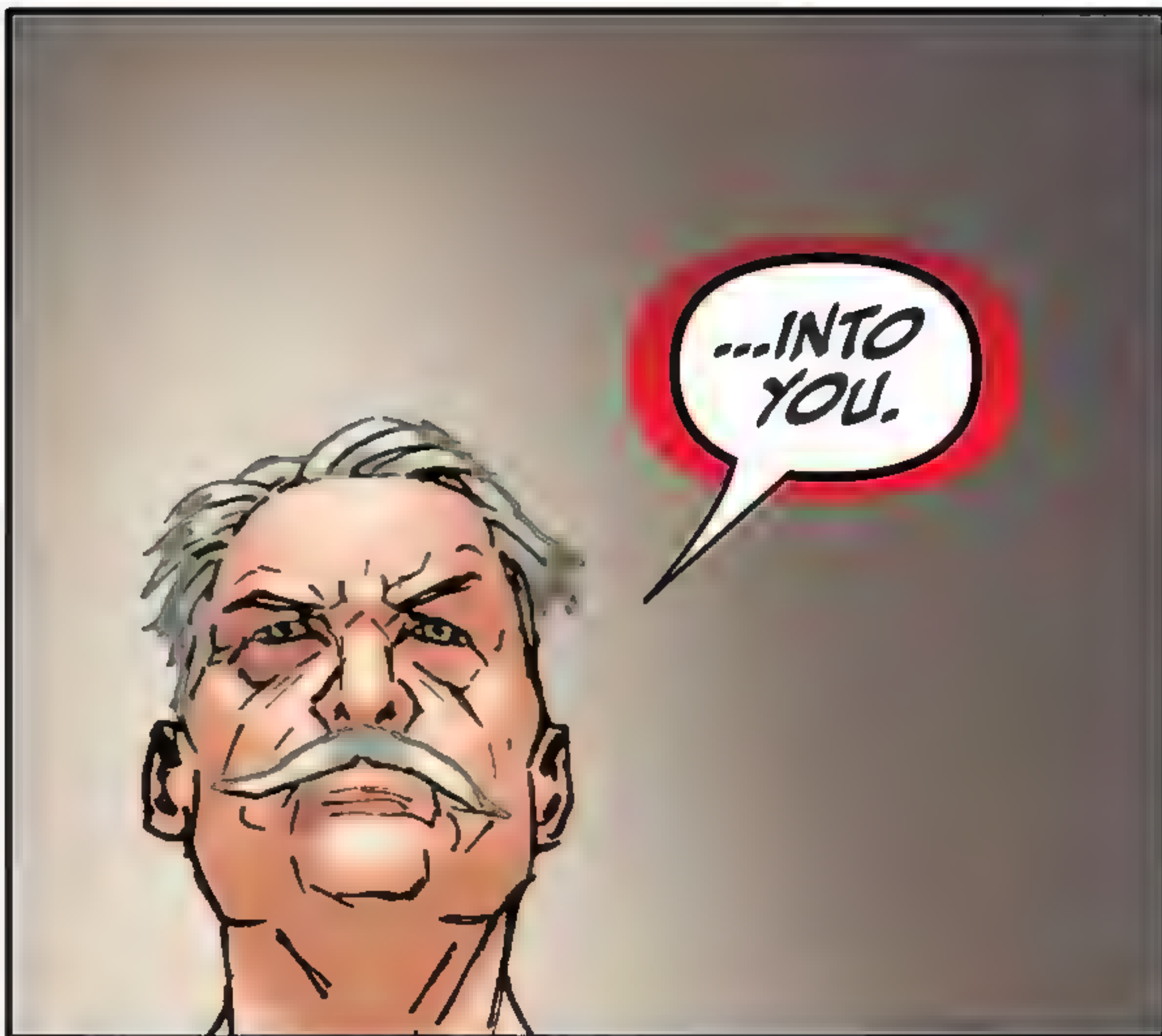
"YOU, CHAINED
TO THIS GUILD,
BORN TO A ROLE
YOU NEVER CHOSE..."

"SHE SPURNS YOU AND
LAUGHS AND YOU CAN'T BRING
YOURSELF TO KILL HER BECAUSE
YOU WANT TO BE HER!"

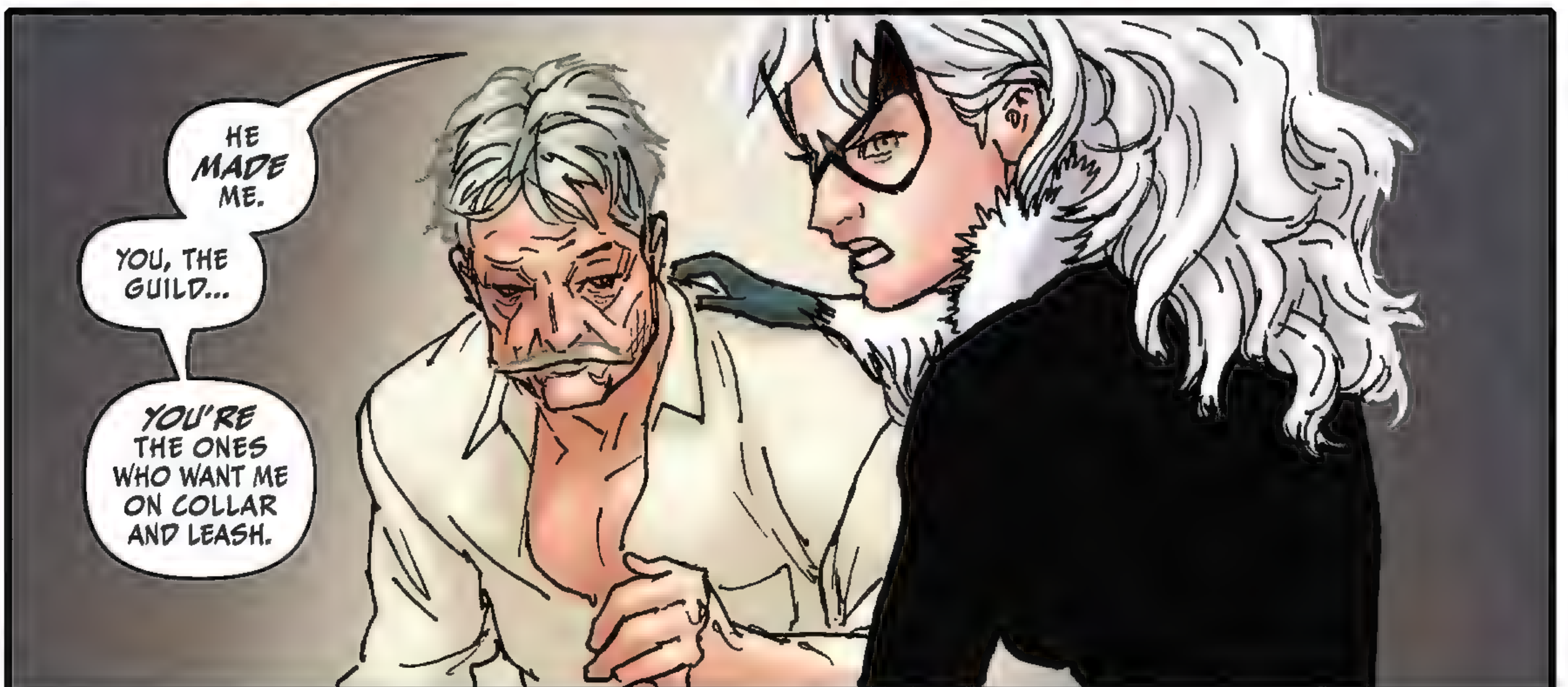
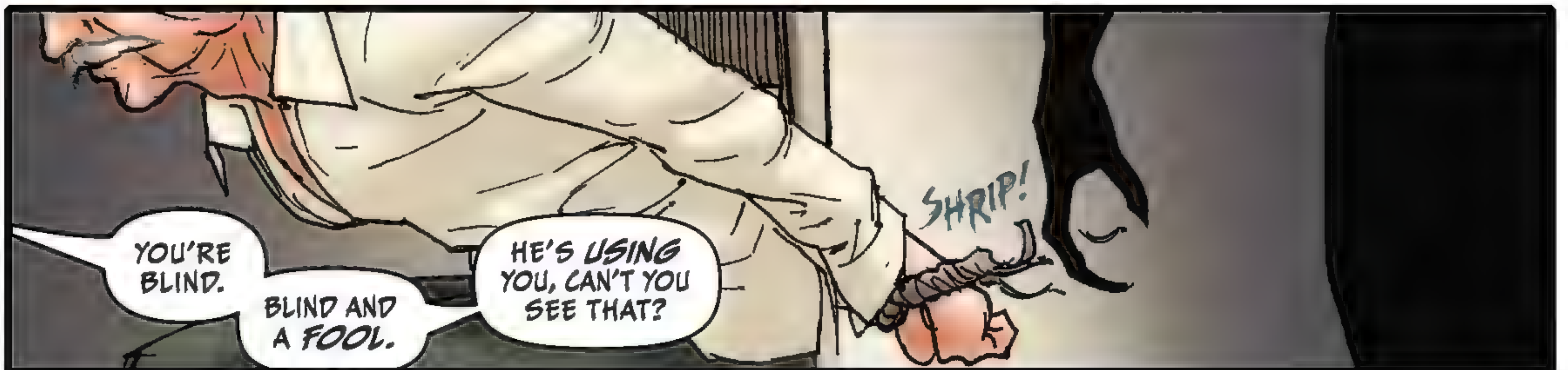
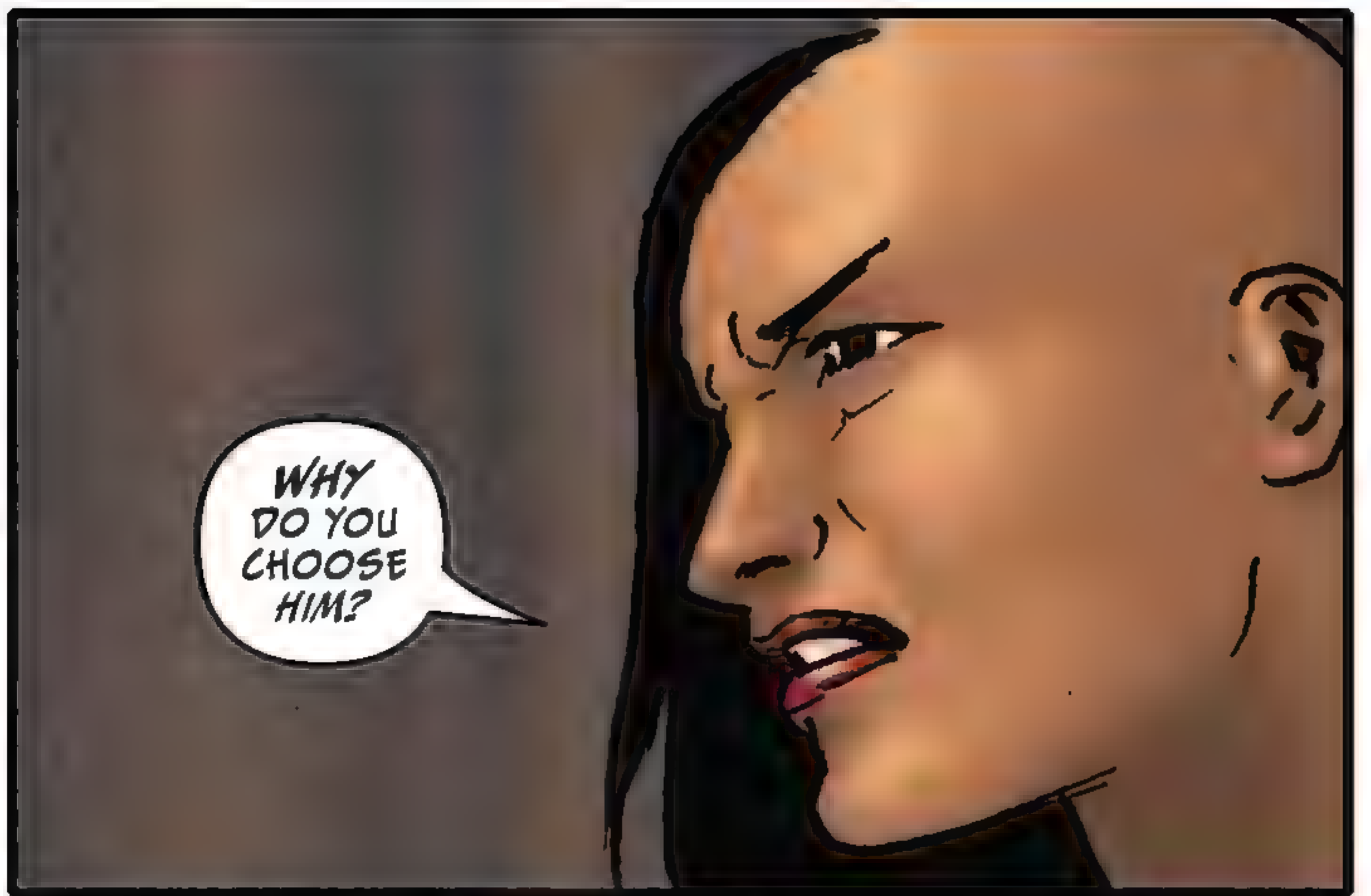
"BUT YOU
CAN'T."

YOU'RE A
DRAKE. YOU'RE
SHACKLED TO
THE GUILD.

SO
INSTEAD,
YOU TRY
TO MAKE
HER...









HE MURDERED
MY FATHER.

UnnnNGHHhh!



AGAIN.

I DID
NOT KILL
CASTILLO,
ODESSA.

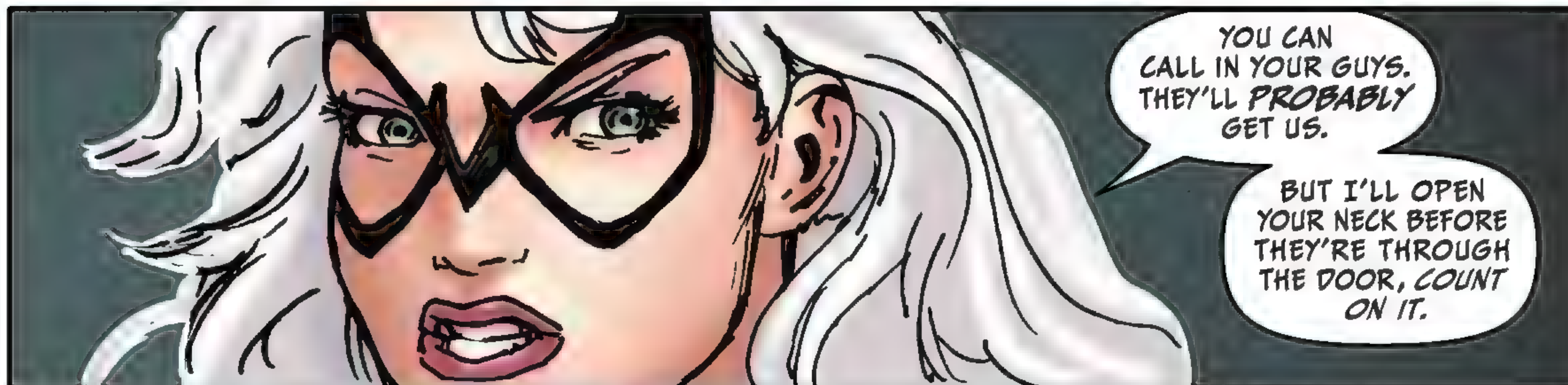
HE WAS
LIKE MY
BLOOD.



AND AGAIN.
YOU LIE.

ALL HE DOES
IS LIE. CAN'T YOU
SEE THAT?

DO YOU
EVEN KNOW
HIS REAL
NAME?



YOU CAN
CALL IN YOUR GUYS.
THEY'LL PROBABLY
GET US.

BUT I'LL OPEN
YOUR NECK BEFORE
THEY'RE THROUGH
THE DOOR, COUNT
ON IT.



OR WE
CAN GO OUR
SEPARATE WAYS
AND WORK THIS
OUT AT A DATE
TO BE DECIDED.

YOU
WOULDN'T
THROW YOUR
LIFE AWAY
LIKE THAT.





WHAT'S
TAKING SO
LONG?

ZIP IT.

RAND

**JANICE LINCOLN.
THE BEETLE.**

MY BACKUP FOR
THE EVENING.

JANICE AND I
HAVE A LOT
IN COMMON.

JUST A COUPLE OF
LADY SUPER-CROOKS
TRYING TO LIVE UP
TO OUR DADS' REPS.

YOU
WANT ME TO
DO IT?

SINCE WHEN
ARE YOU THE
LOCKPICKING
TYPE?

SINCE
NEVER. I HAVE
A SUPER-SUIT--
I'LL JUST TEAR
THE DOOR
OFF.

I GUESS
THAT'S WHY THEY
DON'T CALL THEM
BEETLE-BURGLARS.

*Click
Click*

OF COURSE,
SHE'S A
TOTAL PAIN
IN THE NECK,
BUT SHE
CAN'T HELP IT.
SHE USED
TO BE A
LAWYER.

CHACK!

FINALLY.

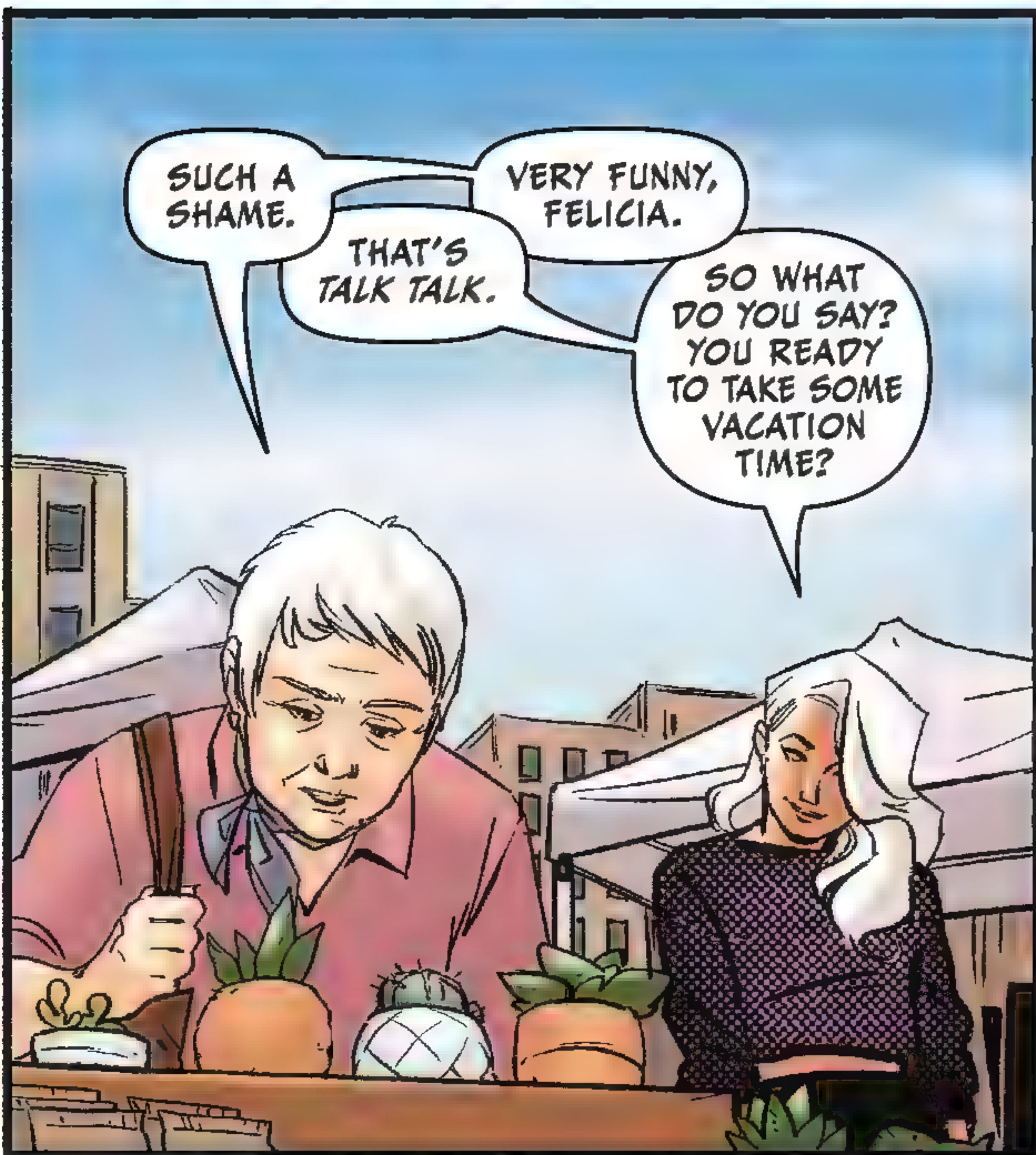
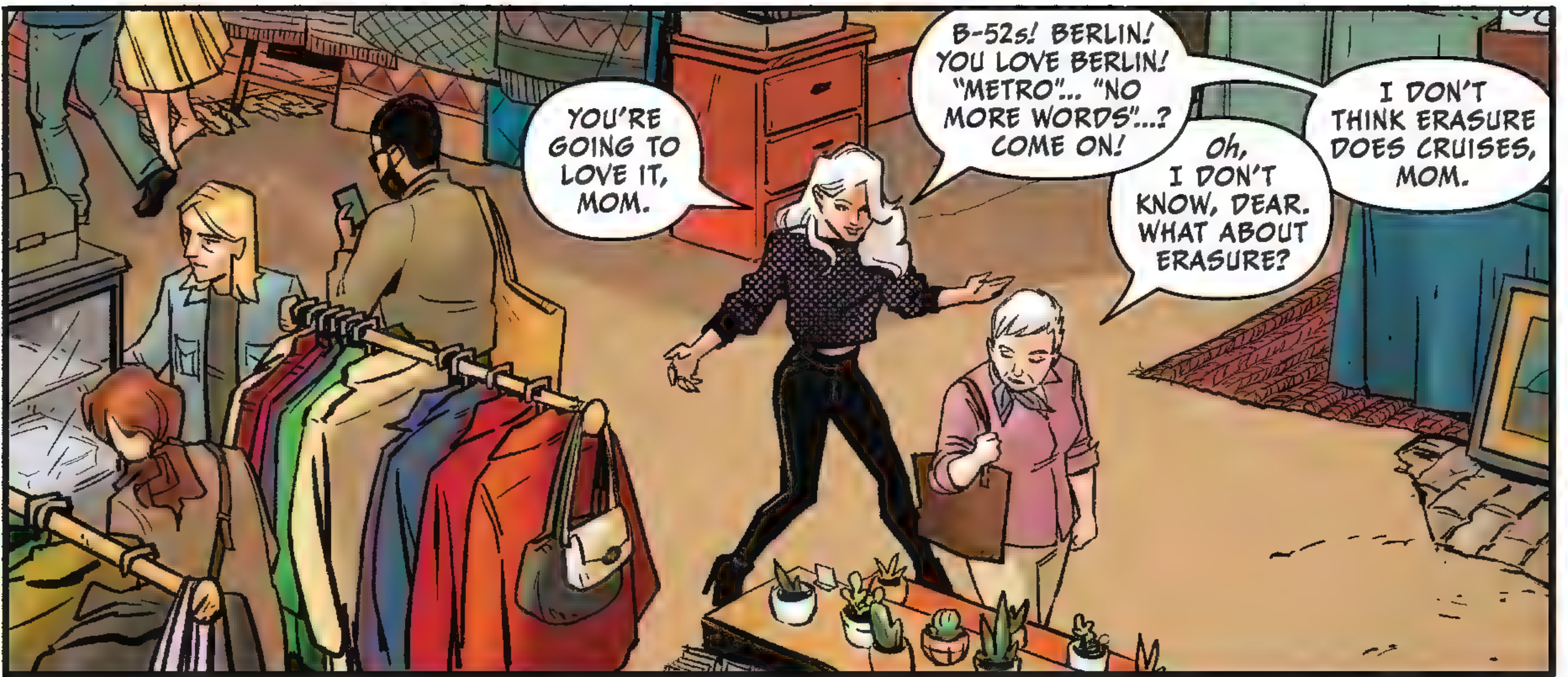
WHAT'S
THE DEAL?

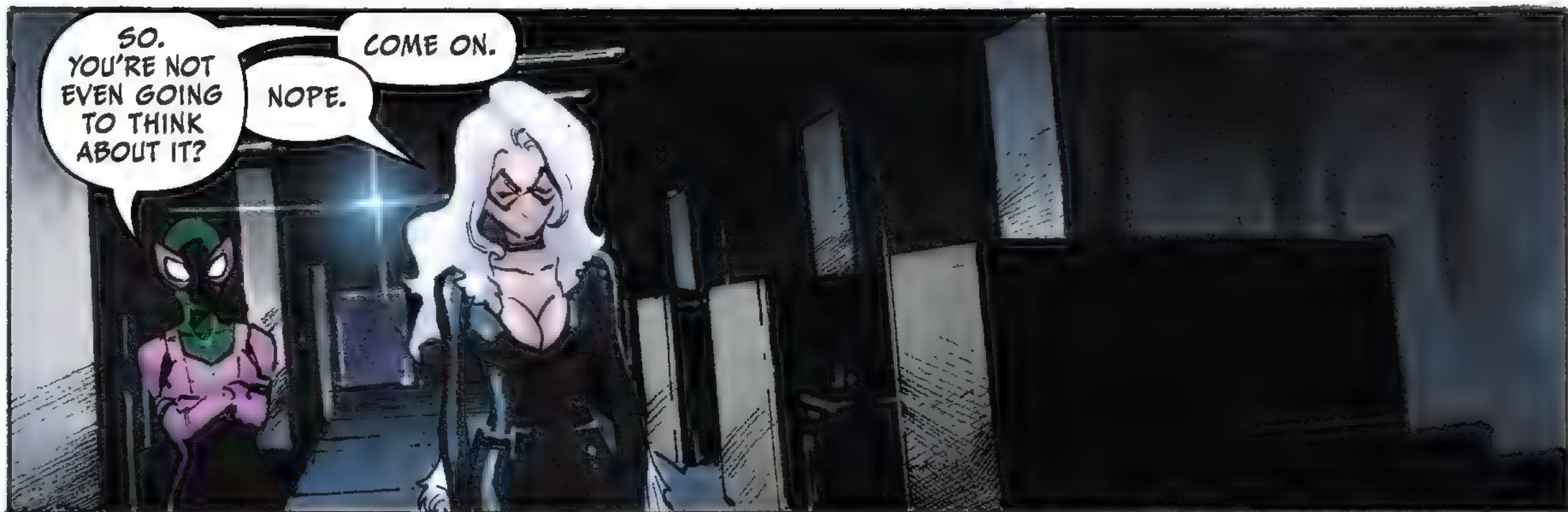
YOU'RE
OFF.

I'M NOT.

I AM.

I'M ALWAYS
OFF AFTER I
SEE MY MOM.







SURE, MY RELATIONSHIP WITH SPIDER-MAN IS COMPLICATED. BUT I'M MORE OF AN EX-GIRLFRIEND THAN A VILLAIN.

HA!

THERE'S A DIFFERENCE?

WHO HURT YOU, JANICE?



SO WE'RE FORGETTING THE TIME YOU TRIED TO MUSCLE MY DAD OUT AND BECOME THE KINGPIN OF CRIME?

QUEENPIN.

AND YES, WE ARE, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

WEIRD, THERE SHOULDN'T BE ANYONE HERE AT THIS HOUR.



YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN A GOOD GET FOR THE SINISTER SYNDICATE, NOT GOING TO LIE. WE COULD USE MORE NAMES.

SUCH A SHAME.

THAT'S TALK TALK.

WHAT?

FORGET IT.



WHAT IS WITH YOU TONIGHT?

I'VE GOT A LOT ON MY MIND RIGHT NOW, JANICE.



THAT, AND I HUNG OUT WITH MY MOM TODAY.

I HEAR THAT.



LYING?
WHO'S
LYING?

GEEZ,
MOM, CAN'T I
DO A NICE THING
FOR YOU WITHOUT
GETTING THE THIRD
DEGREE?



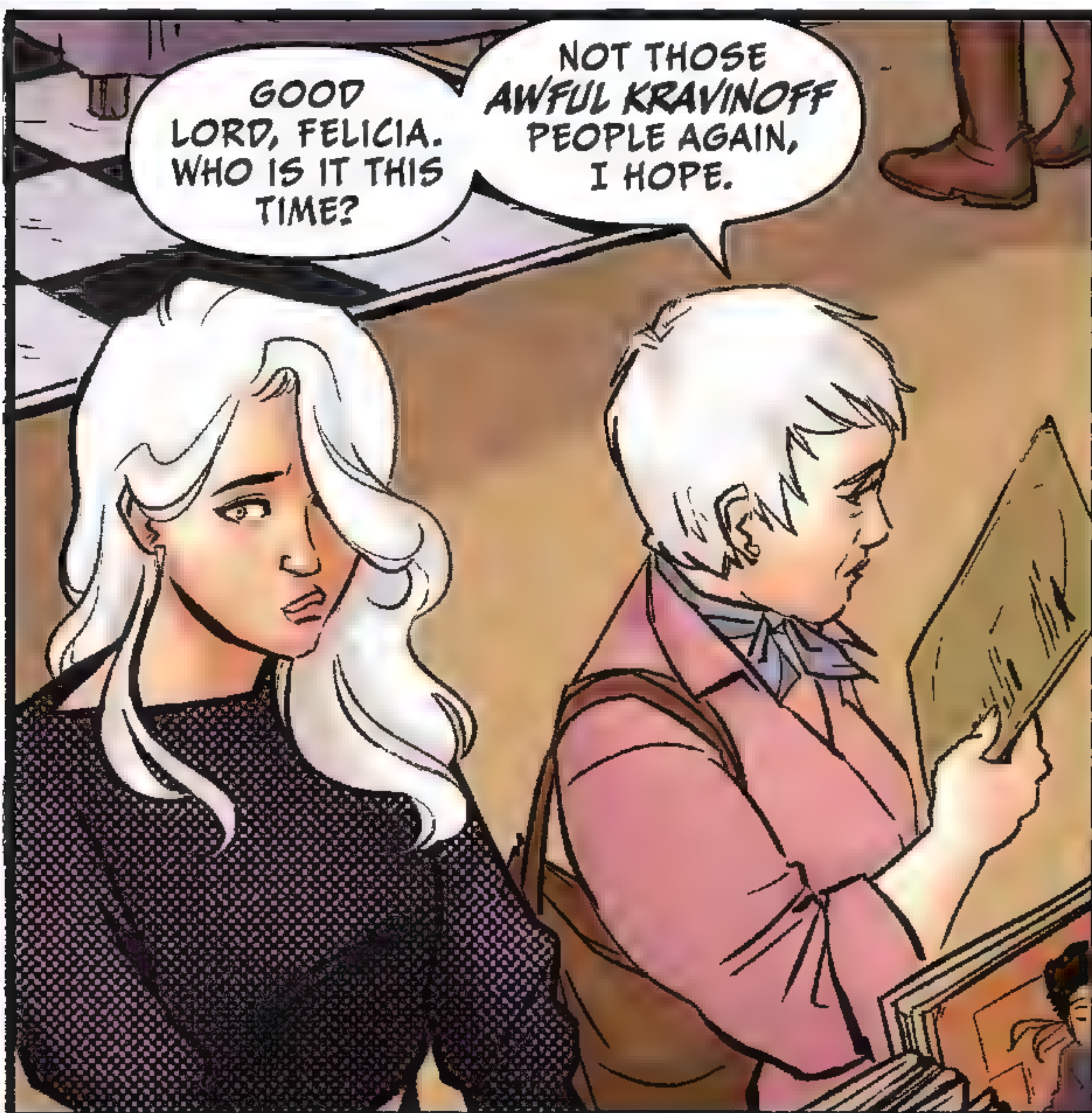
FELICIA.



OKAY.
FINE.

THINGS ARE...
HOTTING UP FOR ME.
I'M KIND OF AT WAR
WITH SOME DANGEROUS
PEOPLE.

I'D FEEL A
LOT BETTER IF
YOU WERE OUT
OF TOWN.



GOOD
LORD, FELICIA.
WHO IS IT THIS
TIME?

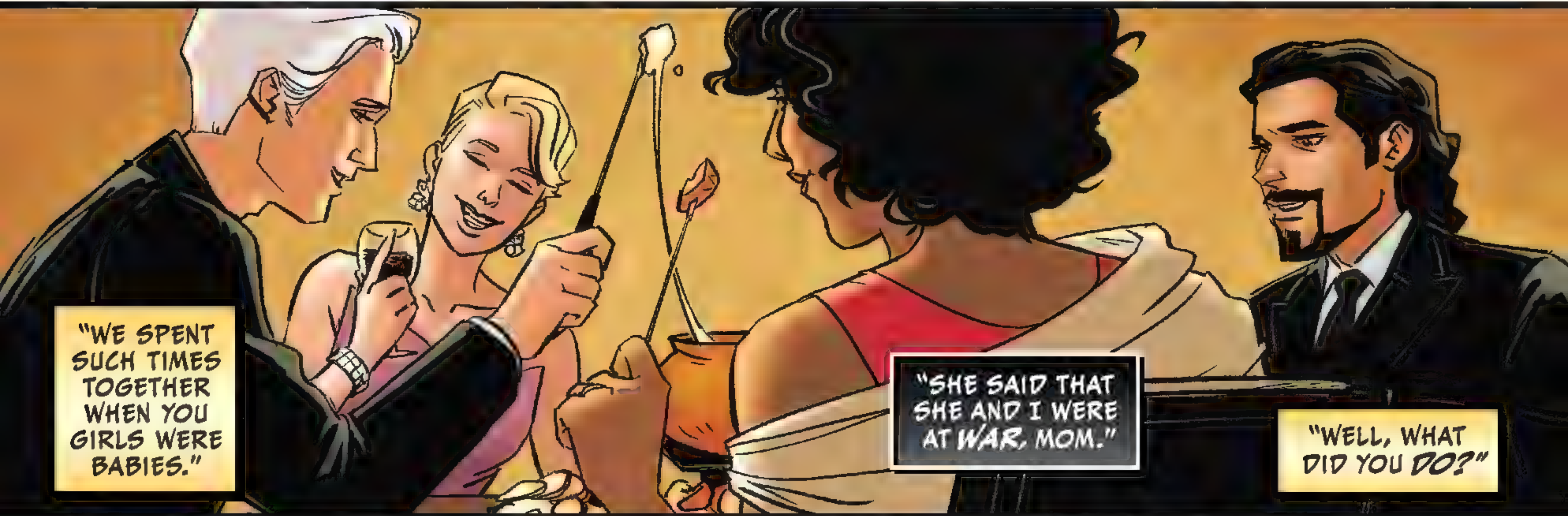
NOT THOSE
AWFUL KRAVINOFF
PEOPLE AGAIN,
I HOPE.



ODESSA
DRAKE.

WHO?

ODESSA
DRAKE.





uhh...

DON'T KNOW
HOW TO **BREAK**
THIS TO YOU, BUT
I DON'T THINK WE
CAN **STEAL** THIS
THING.

WE'RE
NOT GOING TO
STEAL IT.

WE'RE
GOING TO
PIRATE IT.

I DON'T
SEE A SHIP
ANYWHERE...

I HAVE
CERES BUILDING ME
ONE OF THESE, AND
SHE WANTS THE **SCANS**
OF A **FOR-REAL**
EXAMPLE, SO...

...SO
YO-HO-HO.



EXACTLY.

DRONESY:
SCAN.

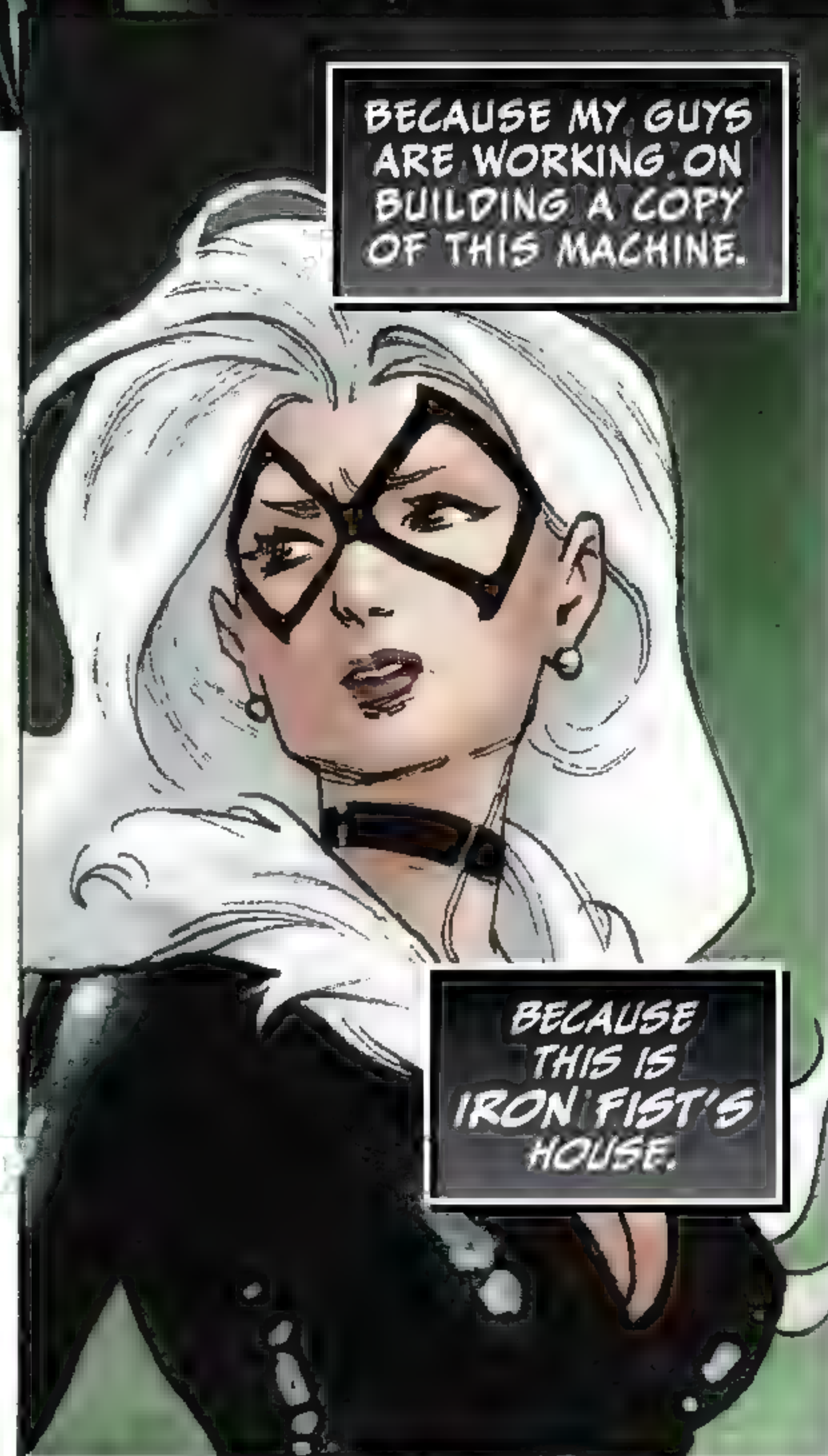


SO...WE BUSTED
INTO RAND TOWER TO
TAKE PICTURES?

YOU WANT TO RIP
OFF SOME PAPER CLIPS,
FEEL FREE TO FILL
YOUR POCKETS.

SO WHY
AM I HERE?
WHY HIRE
ME?

BECAUSE YOU GAVE ME
A REDUCED RATE SO
YOU COULD PITCH ME
THE SINISTER SYNDICATE.



BECAUSE MY GUYS
ARE WORKING ON
BUILDING A COPY
OF THIS MACHINE.

BECAUSE
THIS IS
IRON FIST'S
HOUSE.



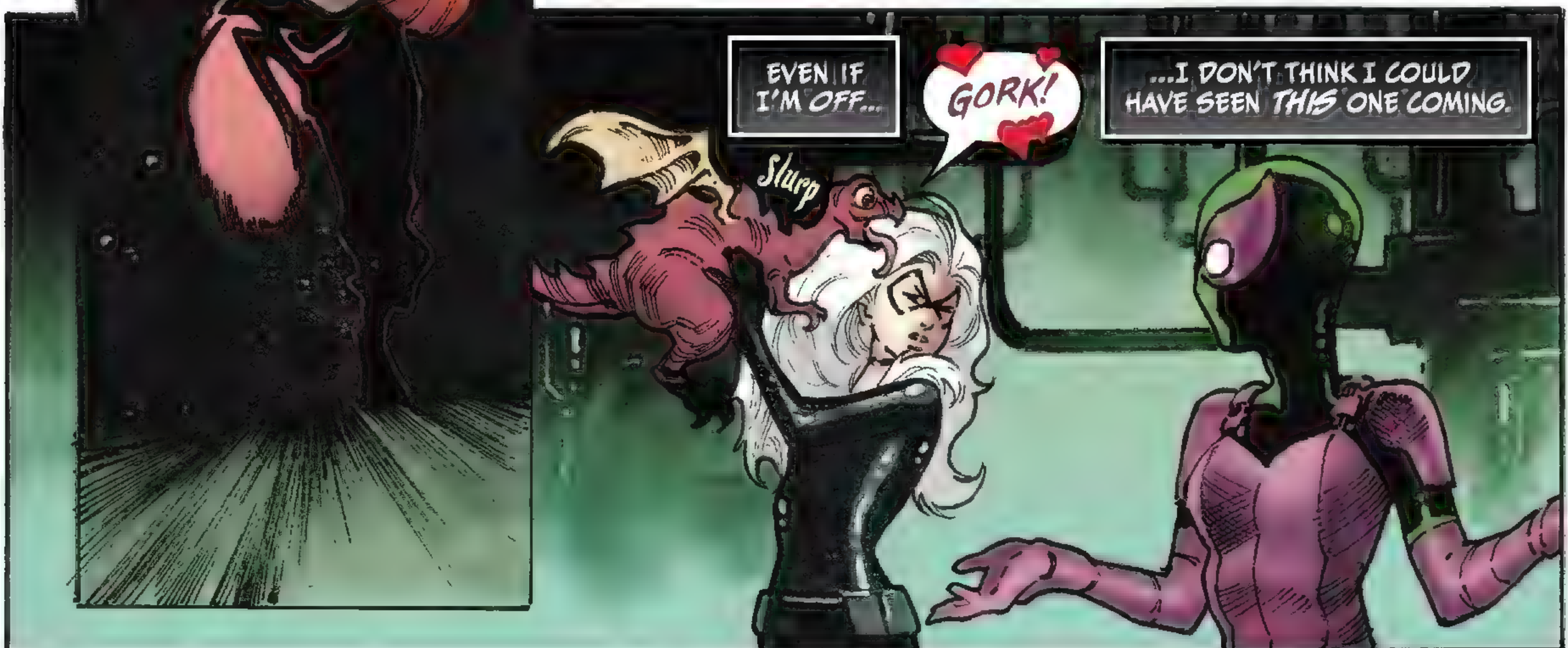
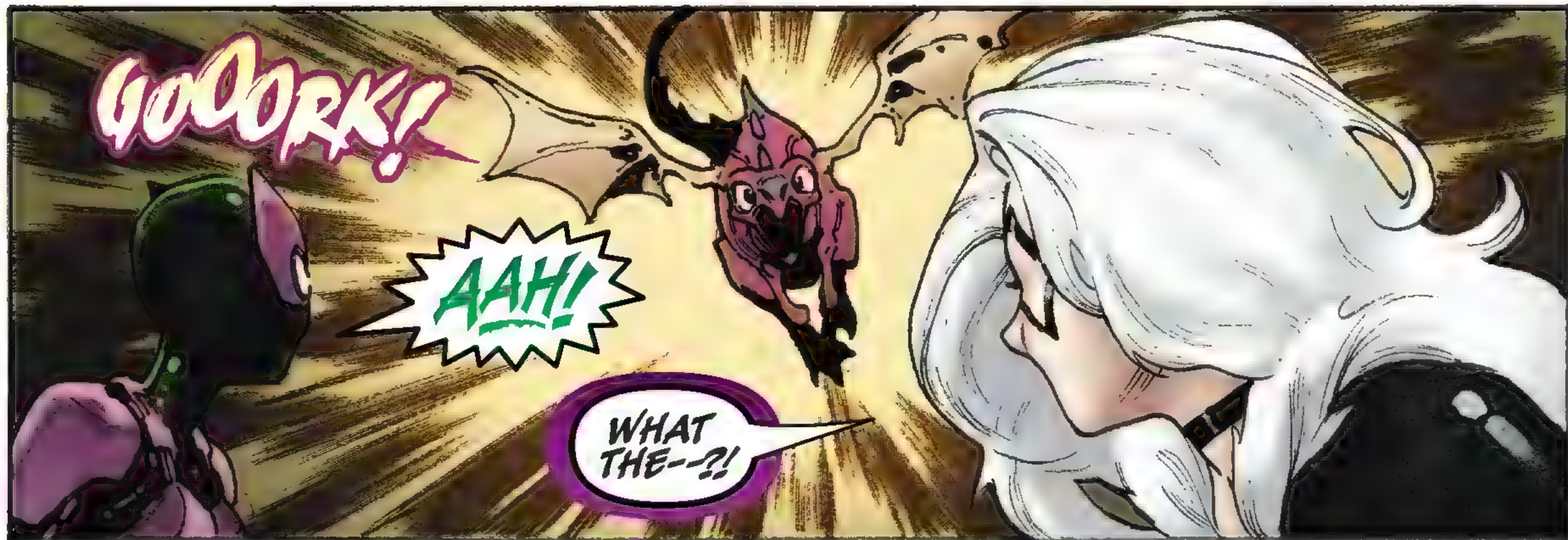
REAL
ANSWER?

BECAUSE THIS
ODESSA BUSINESS
HAS ME SHOOK.

BECAUSE
I'M OFF.

WHAT, I
CAN'T ENJOY YOUR
COMPANY?

HEY,
IT'S YOUR
MONEY.





THE BLACK FOX AND I ARE WORKING TOGETHER.

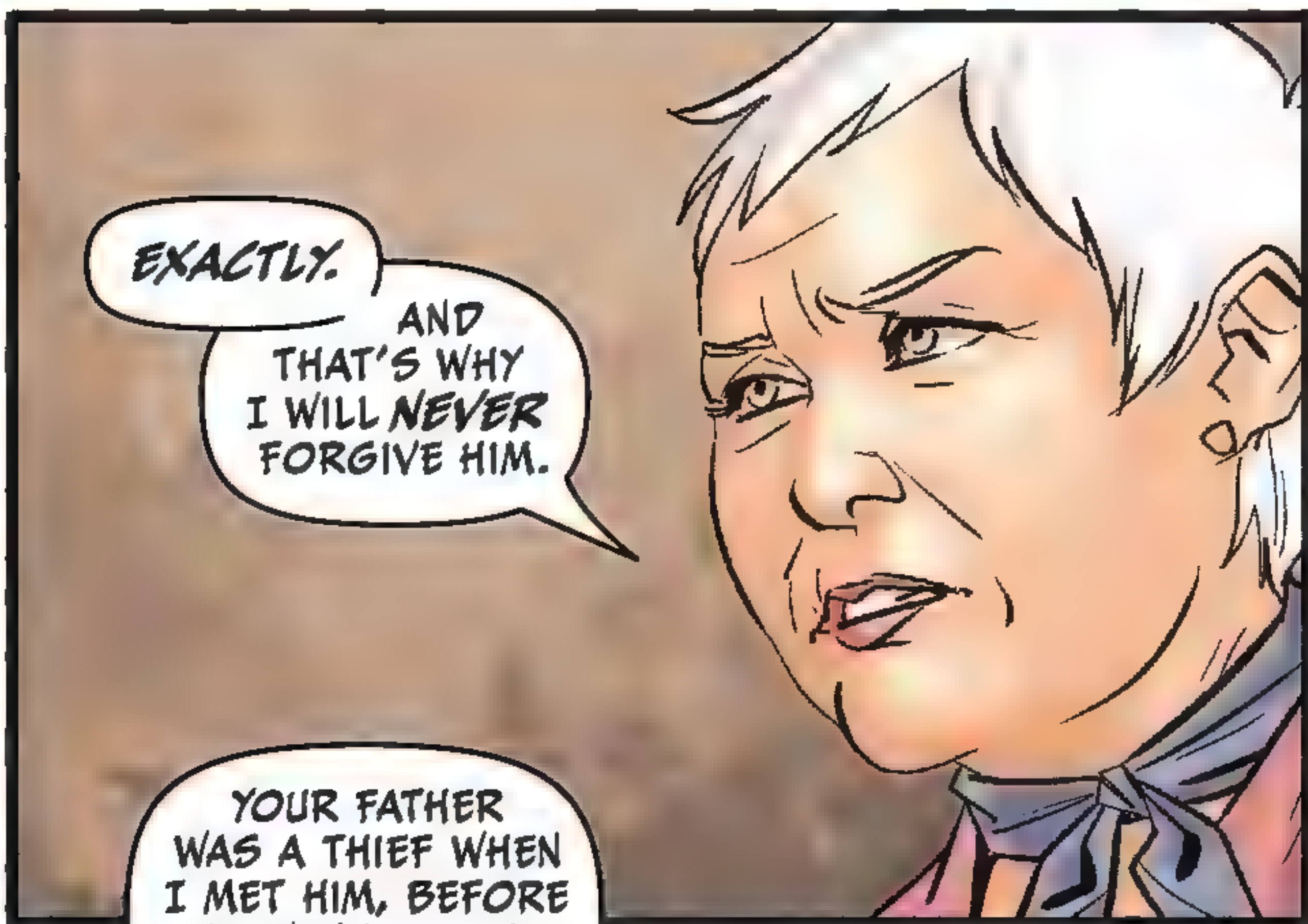
ON A CAPER, YOU KNOW.

YOU'RE WORKING WITH THAT OLD CHARLATAN?!



WELL, YEAH.

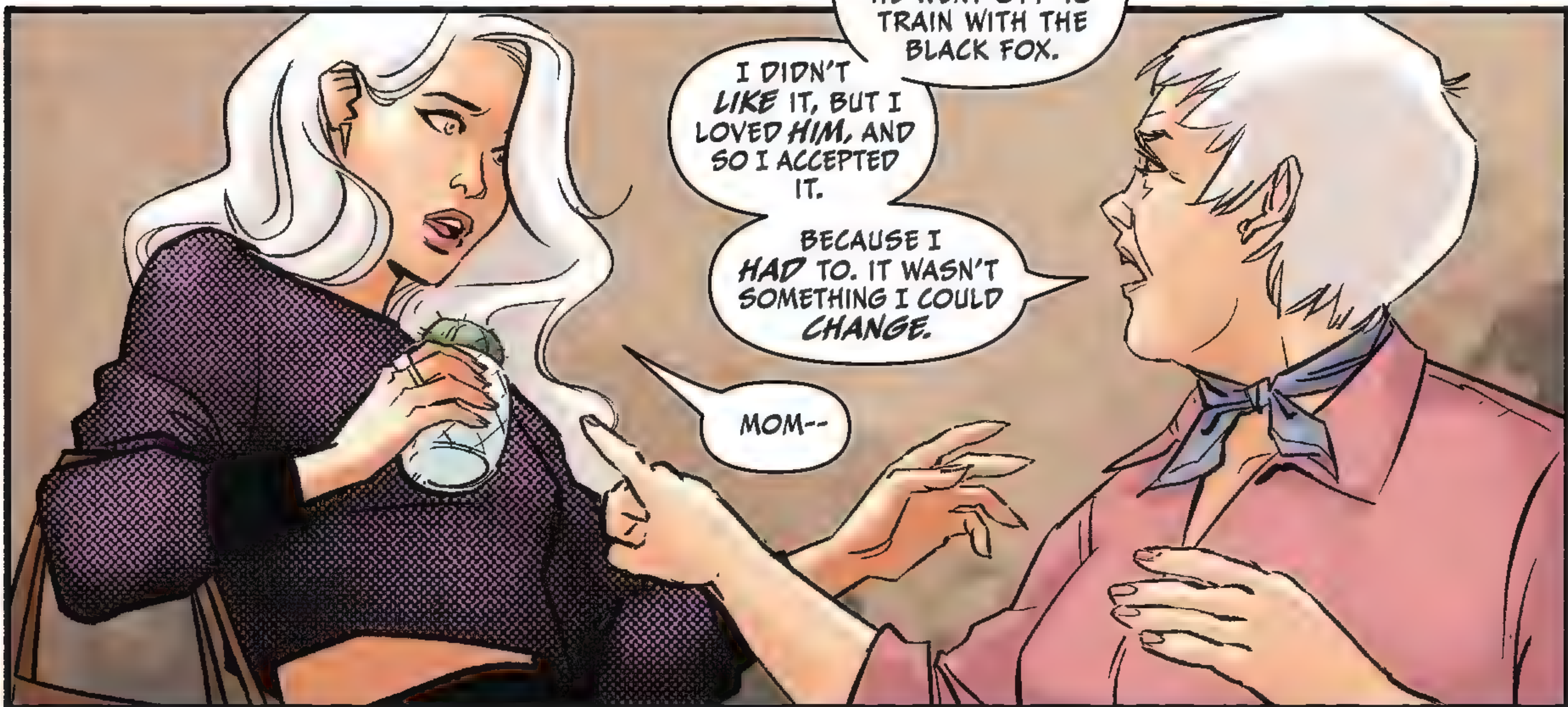
WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? THE FOX MADE ME WHO I AM. MADE DAD WHO HE WAS.



EXACTLY.

AND THAT'S WHY I WILL NEVER FORGIVE HIM.

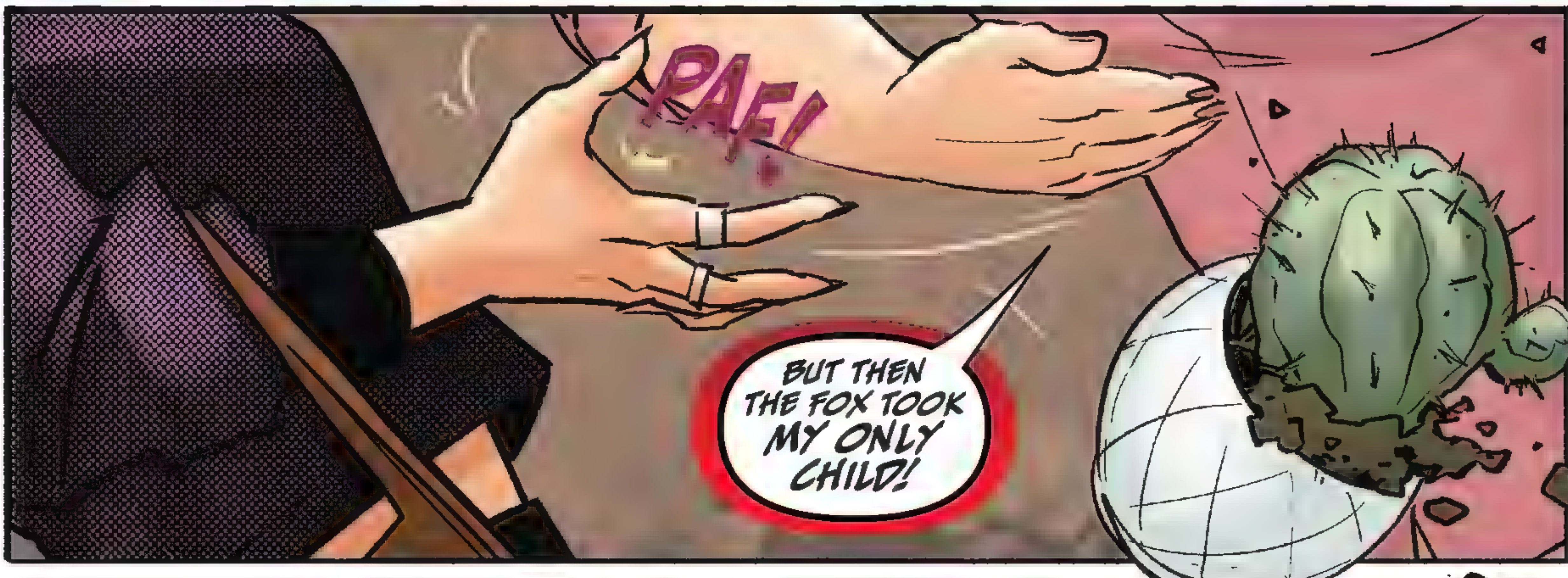
YOUR FATHER WAS A THIEF WHEN I MET HIM, BEFORE HE WENT OFF TO TRAIN WITH THE BLACK FOX.



I DIDN'T LIKE IT, BUT I LOVED HIM, AND SO I ACCEPTED IT.

BECAUSE I HAD TO. IT WASN'T SOMETHING I COULD CHANGE.

MOM--



BUT THEN THE FOX TOOK MY ONLY CHILD!



I'M SORRY,
FELICIA.



HEY,
IT'S *YOUR*
CACTUS.

ANYWAY,
I THINK
IT CAN BE
SAVED.

THAT'S
NOT WHAT
I MEANT.



LOOK,
MOM...

THE FOX
DIDN'T *FORCE*
ME INTO A LIFE
OF LARCENY.

I WAS IN *JAIL*
WHEN I MET HIM.
HAD GOTTEN PINCHED
FOR TRYING TO RIP OFF
A JEWELRY STORE.
THE FOX BAILED ME
OUT.



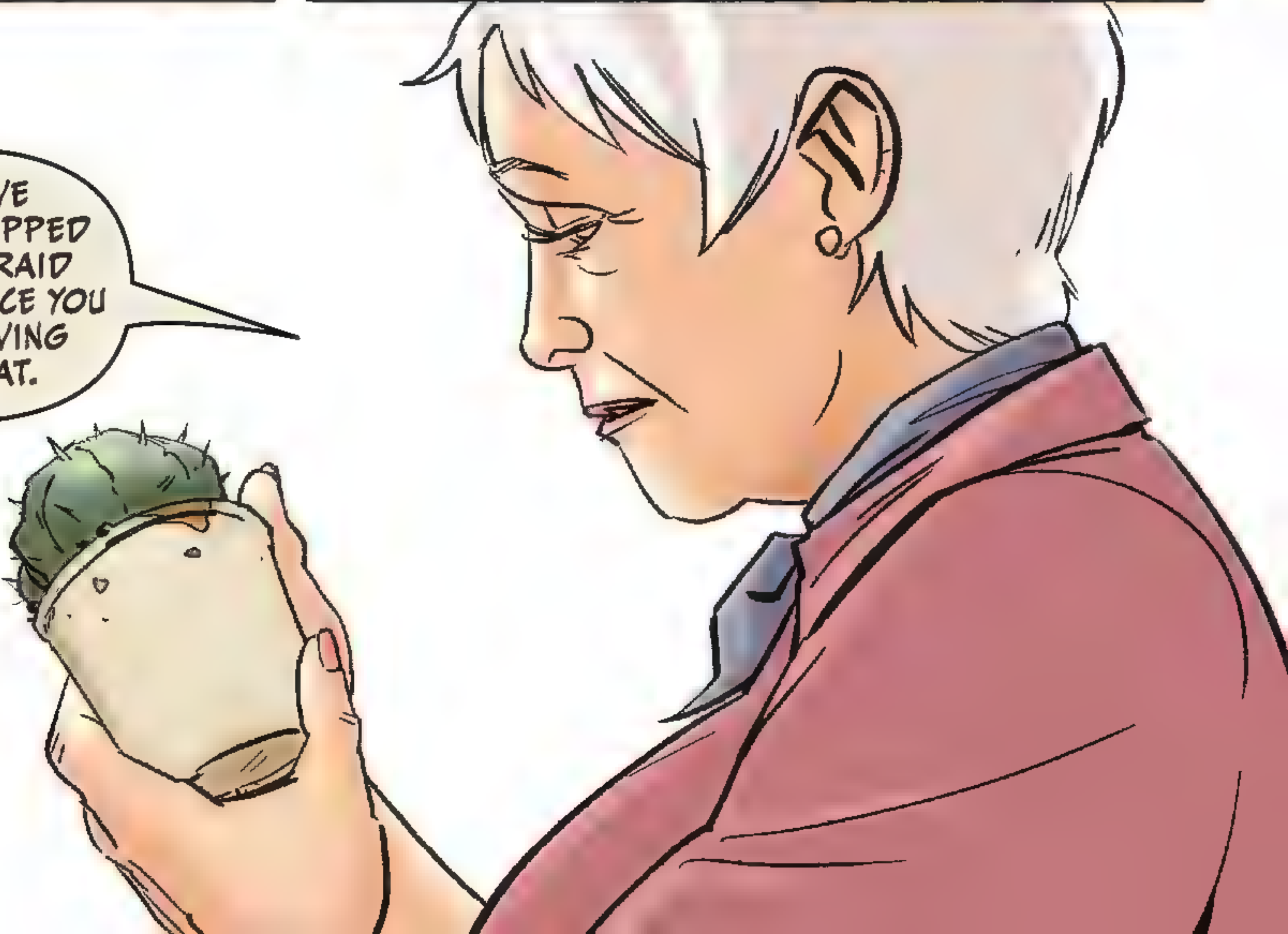
I KNEW YOU
WOULD FOLLOW AFTER
YOUR FATHER.

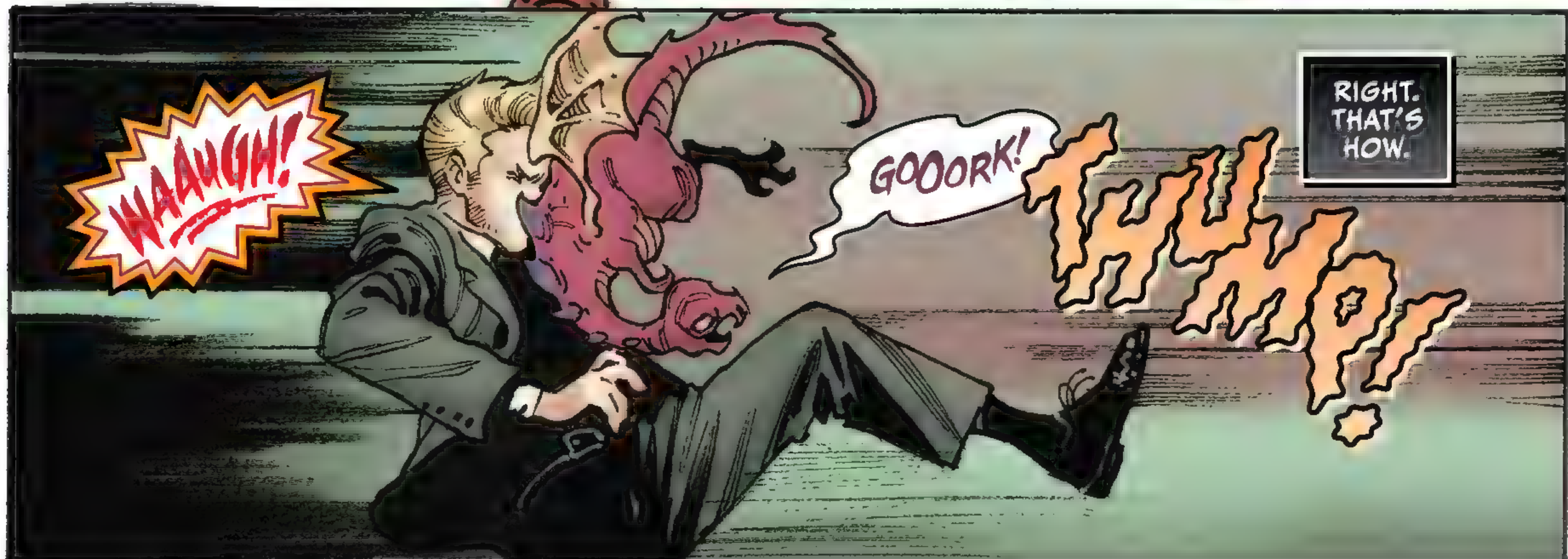
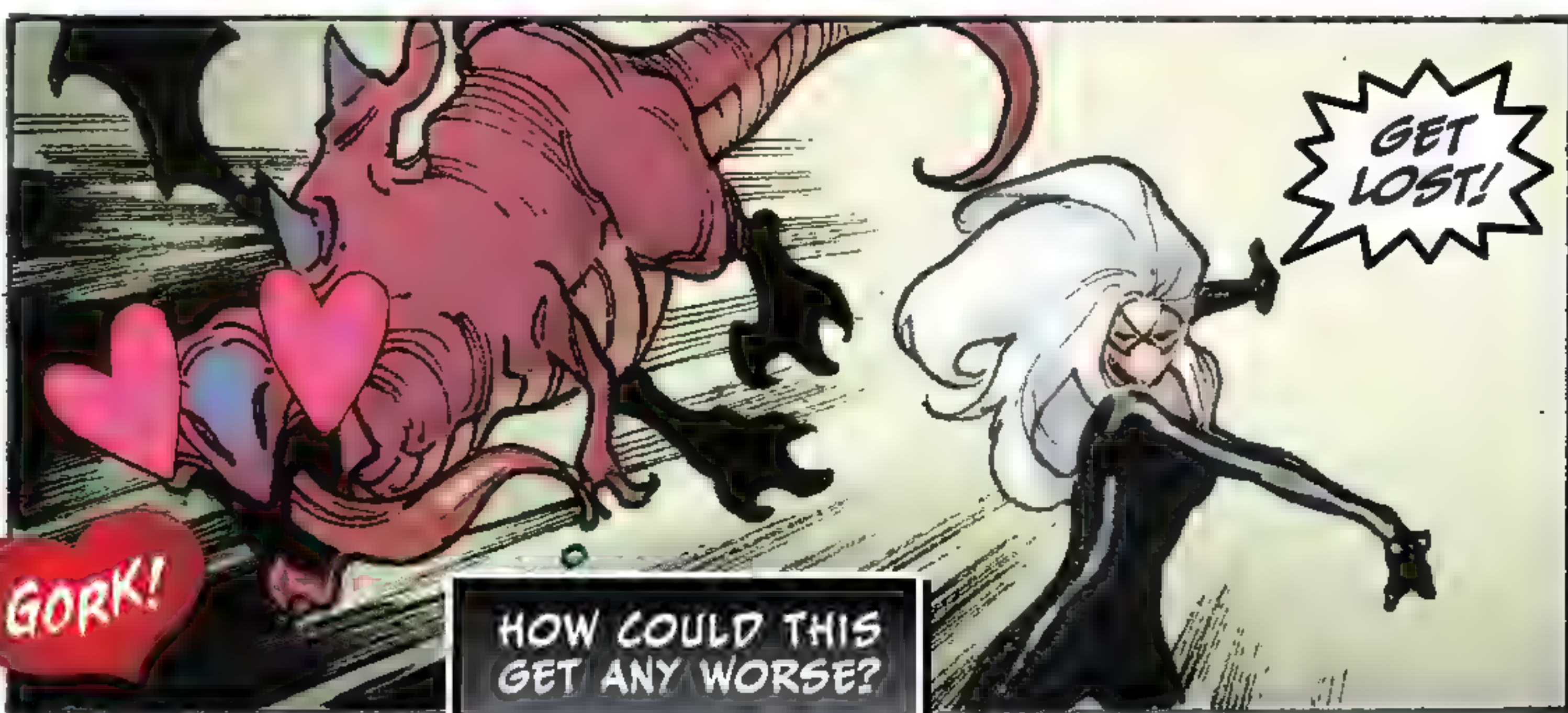
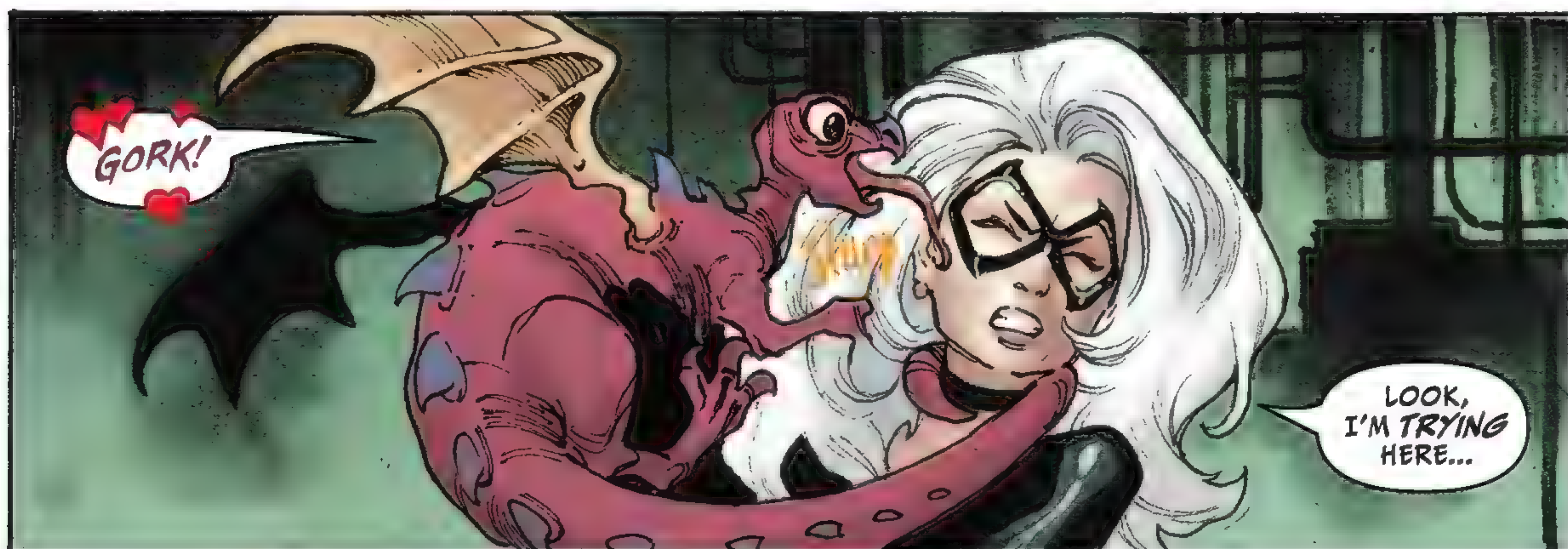
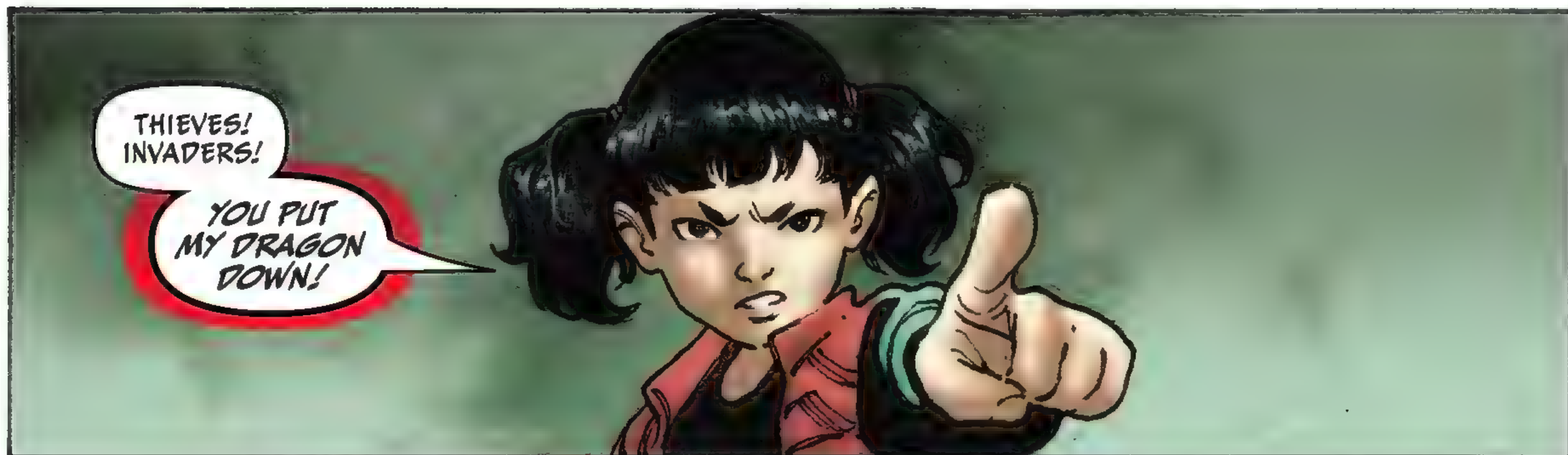
I HATED IT,
BUT I KNEW.

BUT THE
BLACK FOX...

...HE MADE
YOU INTO THE
BLACK CAT.

AND I'VE
NEVER STOPPED
BEING AFRAID
FOR YOU SINCE YOU
BEGAN LIVING
LIKE THAT.







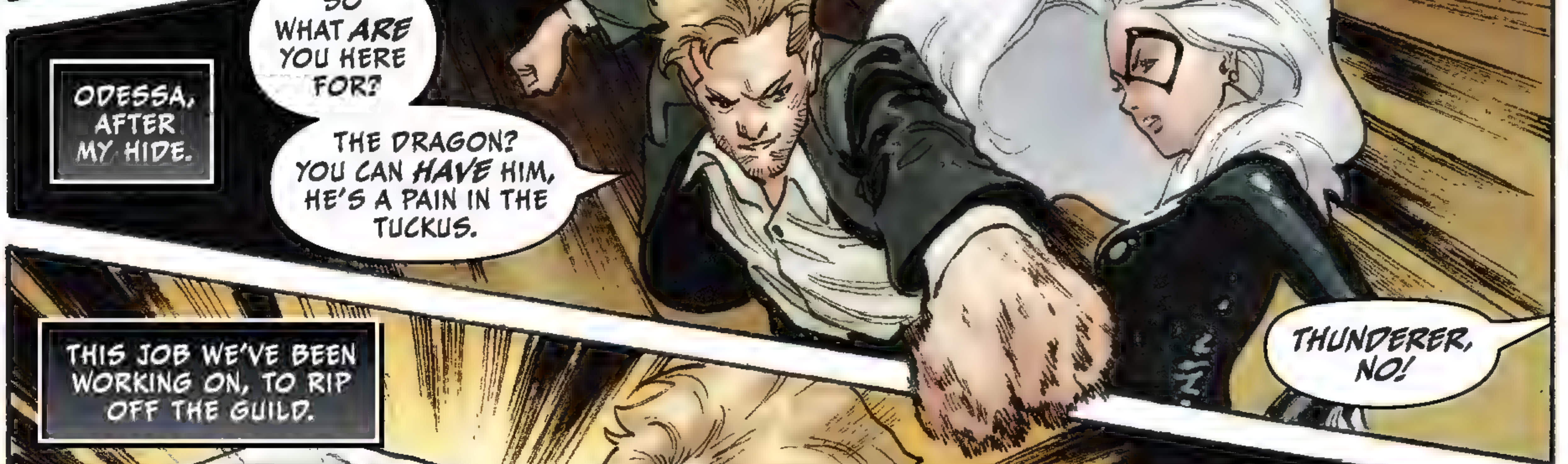
SO MANY
PLATES IN
THE AIR.

ARE
YOU TRYING
TO STEAL MY
RANDALL
GATE?!

IT
WEIGHS
LIKE A
HUNDRED
TONS!

WE ALREADY
DID THAT
GAG, PAL.

KEEP UP.

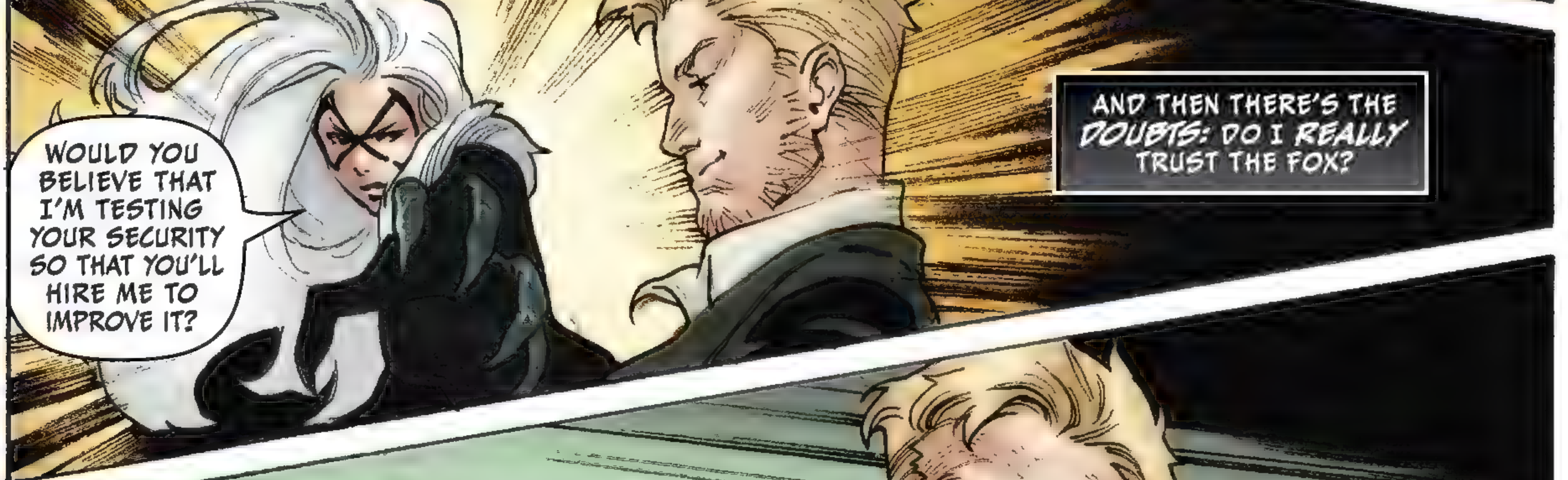


ODESSA,
AFTER
MY HIDE.

SO
WHAT ARE
YOU HERE
FOR?

THE DRAGON?
YOU CAN HAVE HIM,
HE'S A PAIN IN THE
TUCKUS.

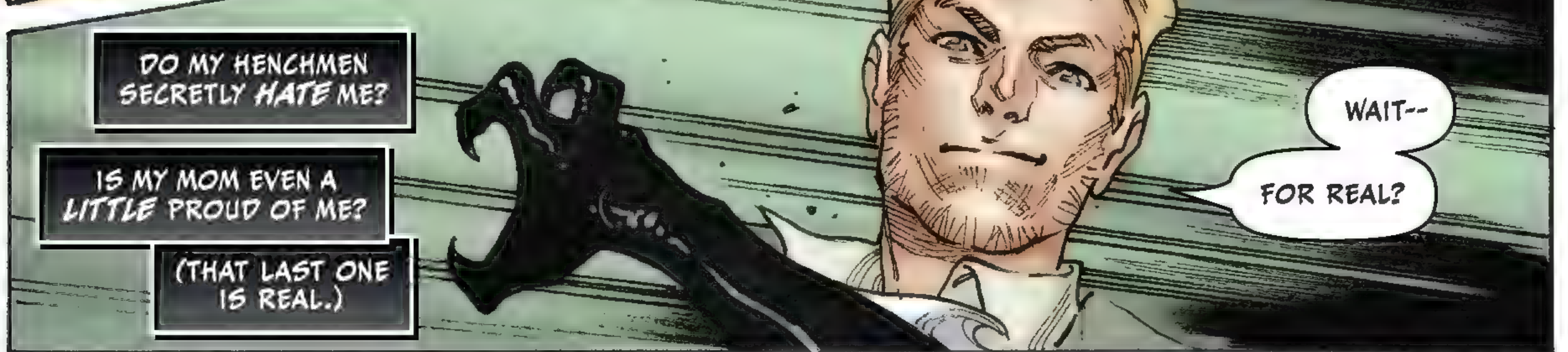
THUNDERER,
NO!



THIS JOB WE'VE BEEN
WORKING ON, TO RIP
OFF THE GUILD.

WOULD YOU
BELIEVE THAT
I'M TESTING
YOUR SECURITY
SO THAT YOU'LL
HIRE ME TO
IMPROVE IT?

AND THEN THERE'S THE
DOUBTS: DO I REALLY
TRUST THE FOX?



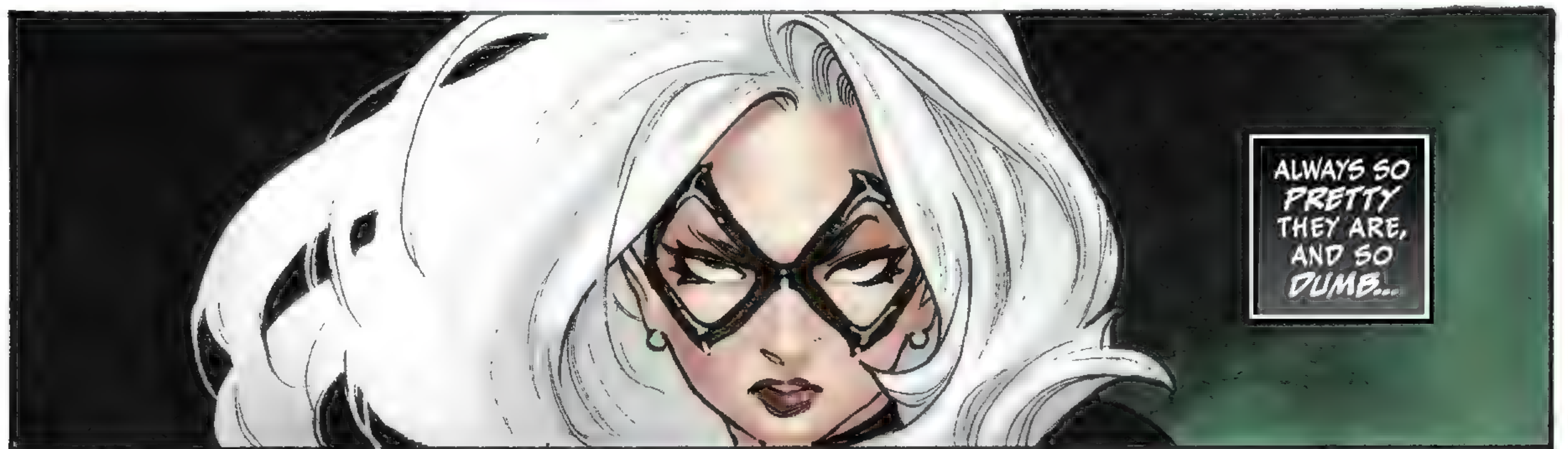
DO MY HENCHMEN
SECRETLY HATE ME?

IS MY MOM EVEN A
LITTLE PROUD OF ME?

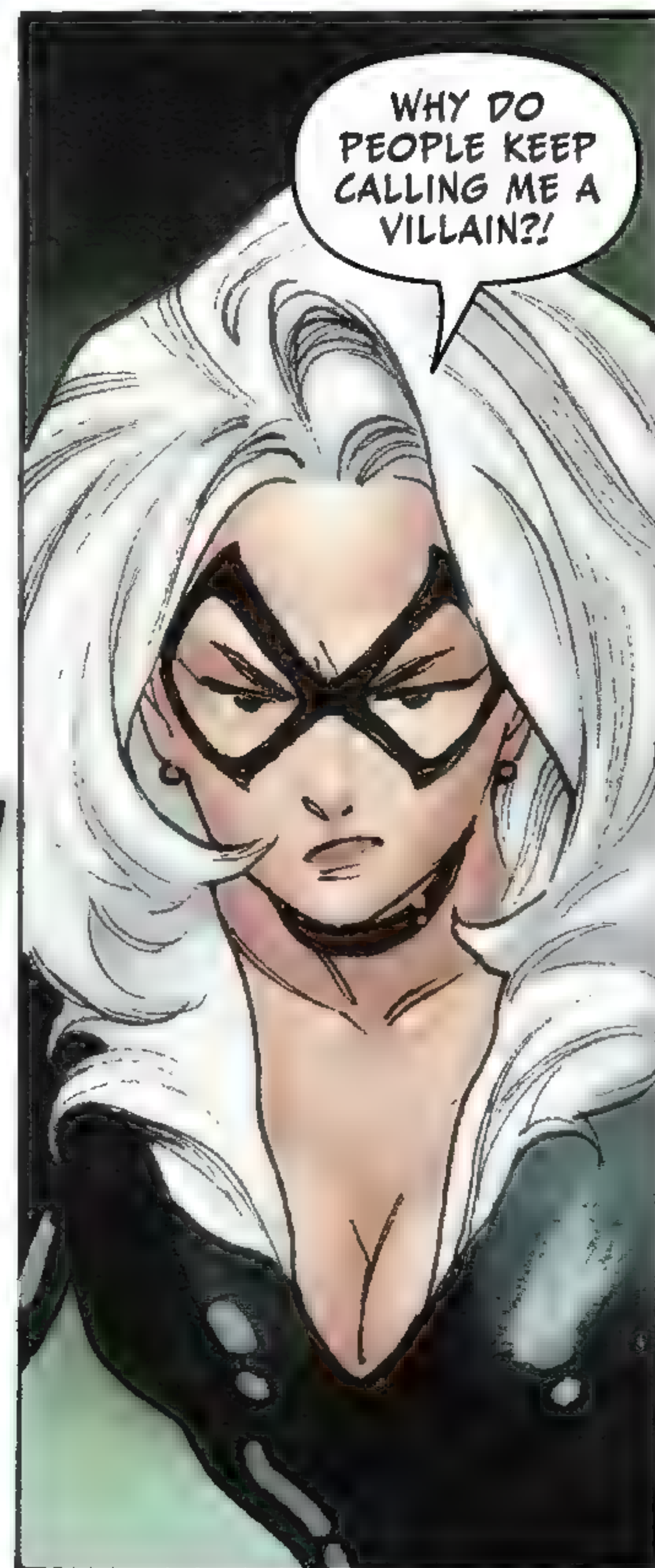
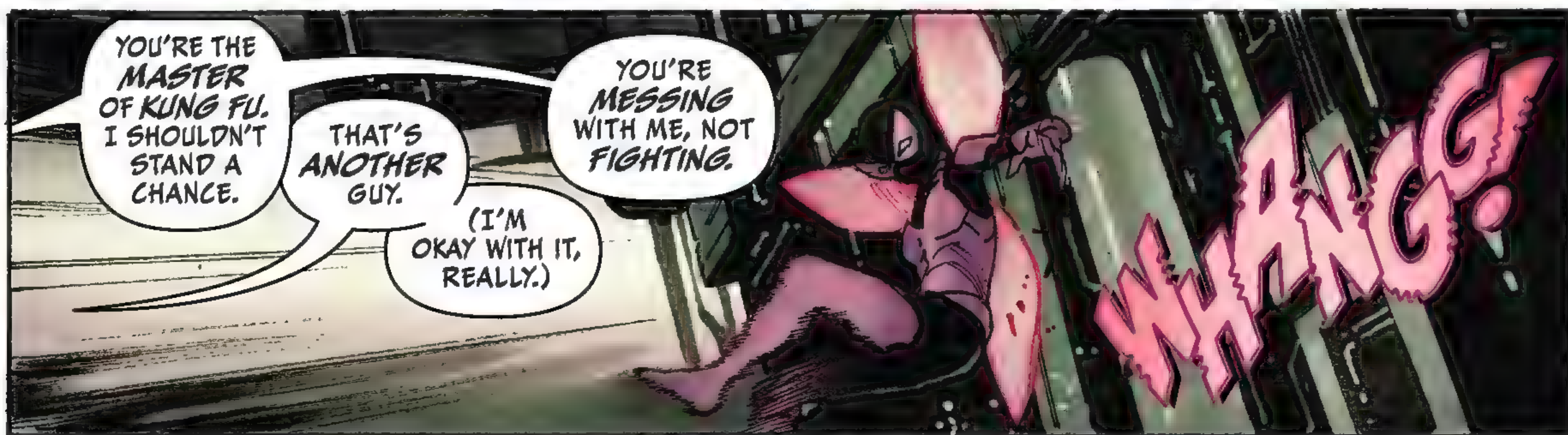
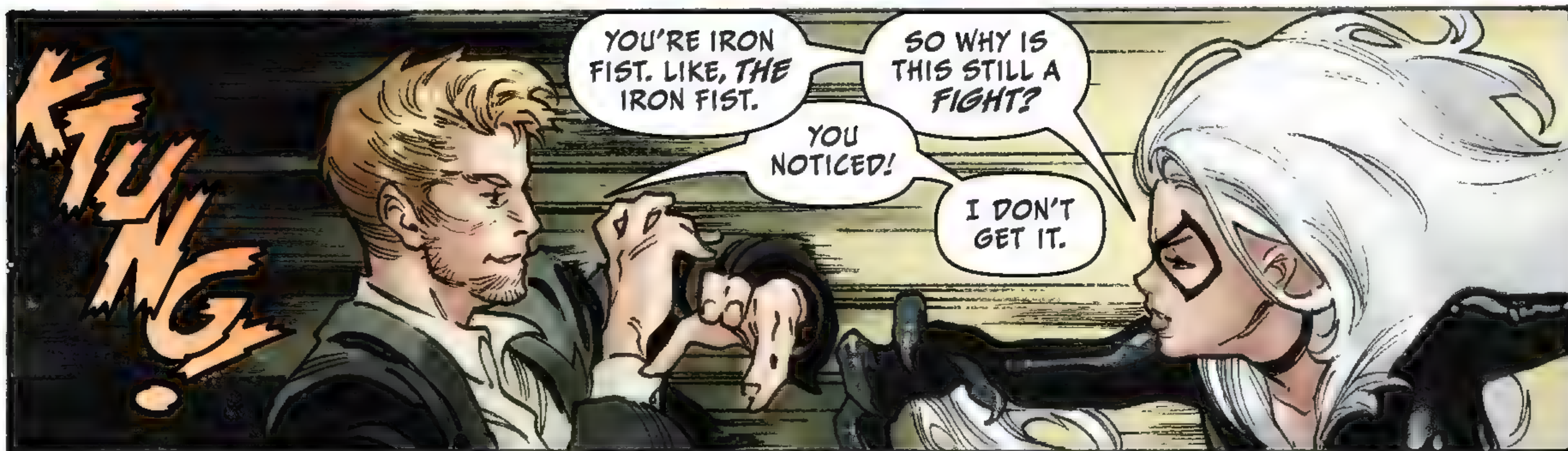
(THAT LAST ONE
IS REAL.)

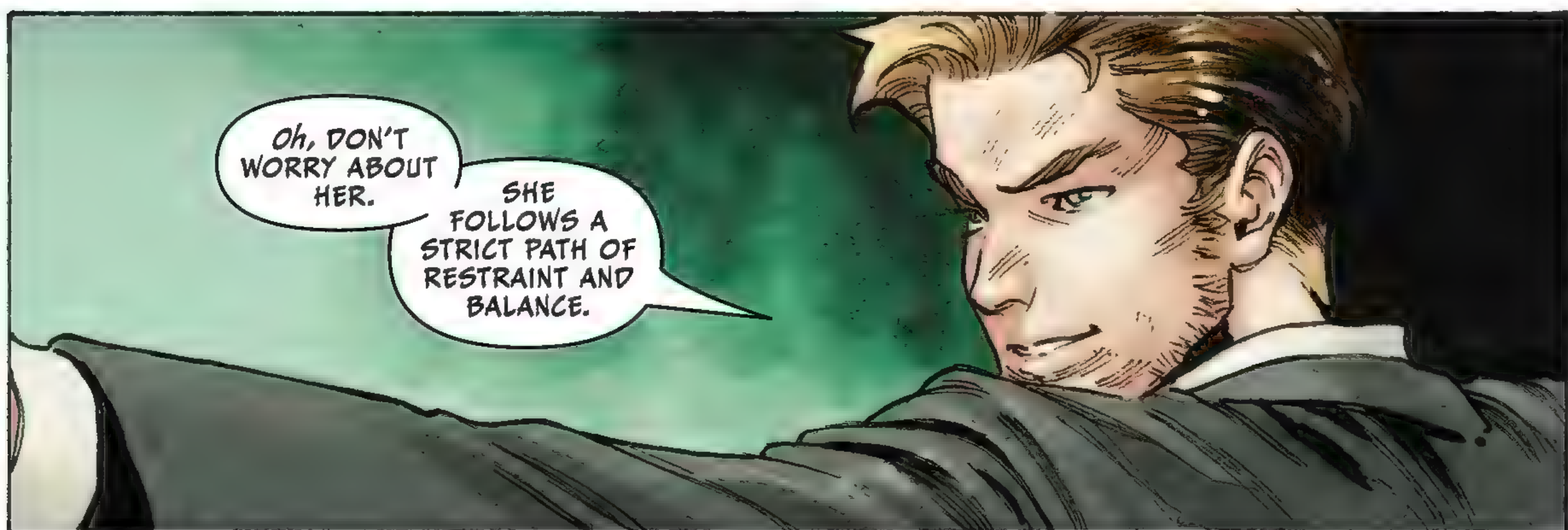
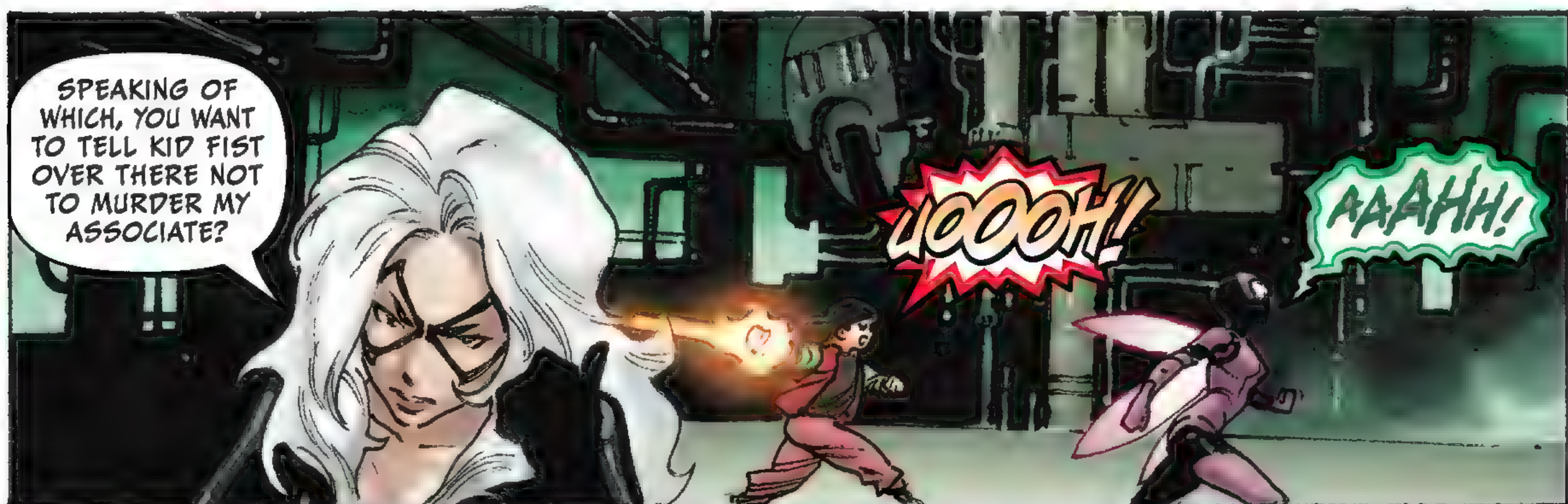
WAIT--

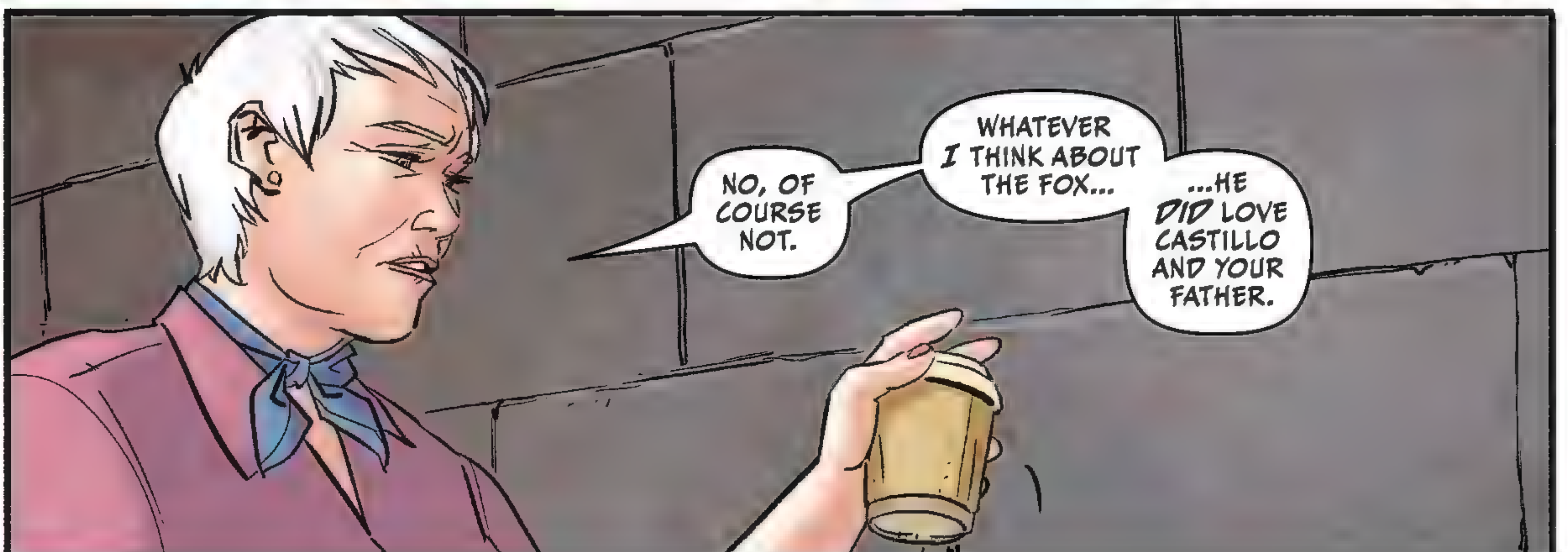
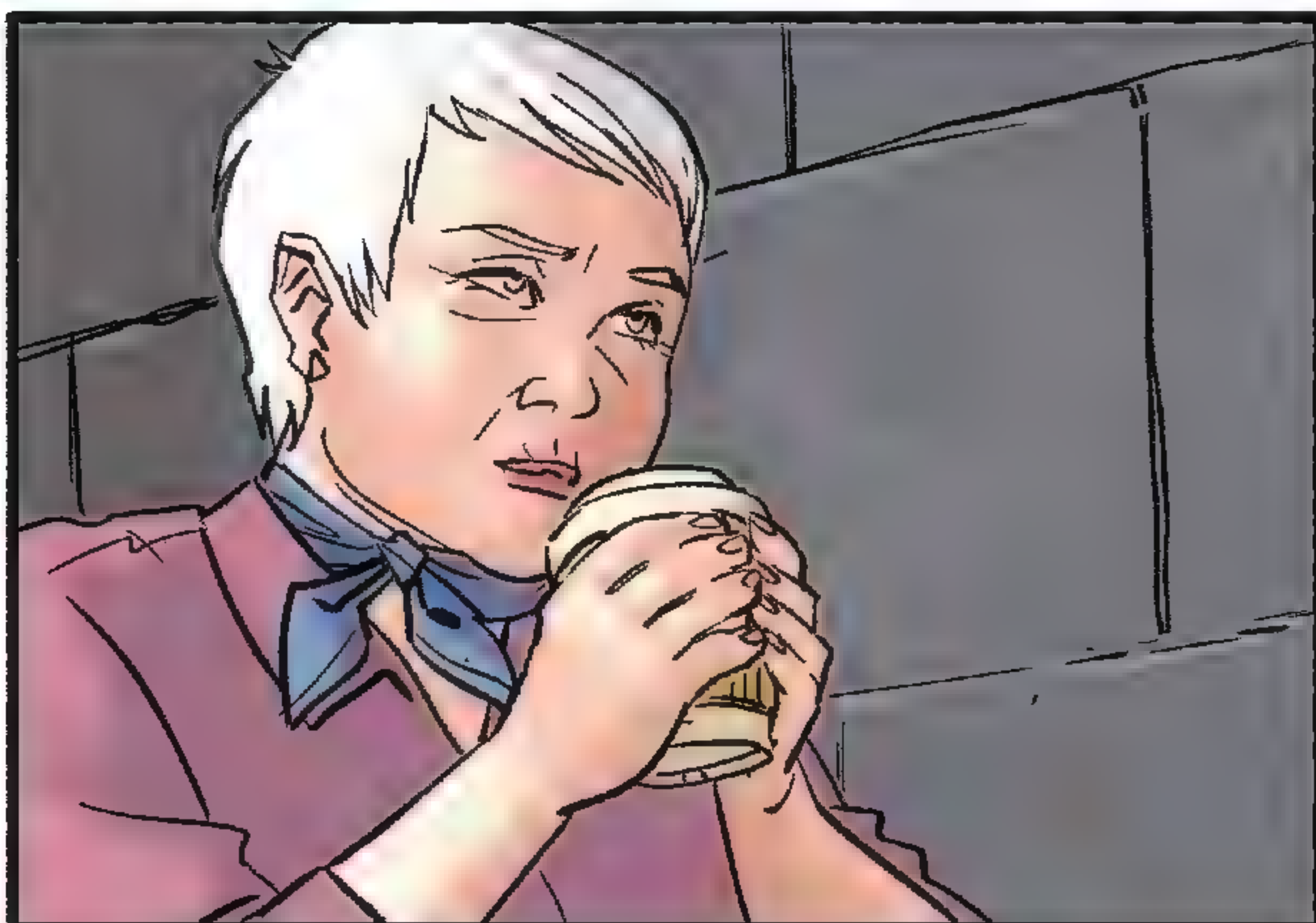
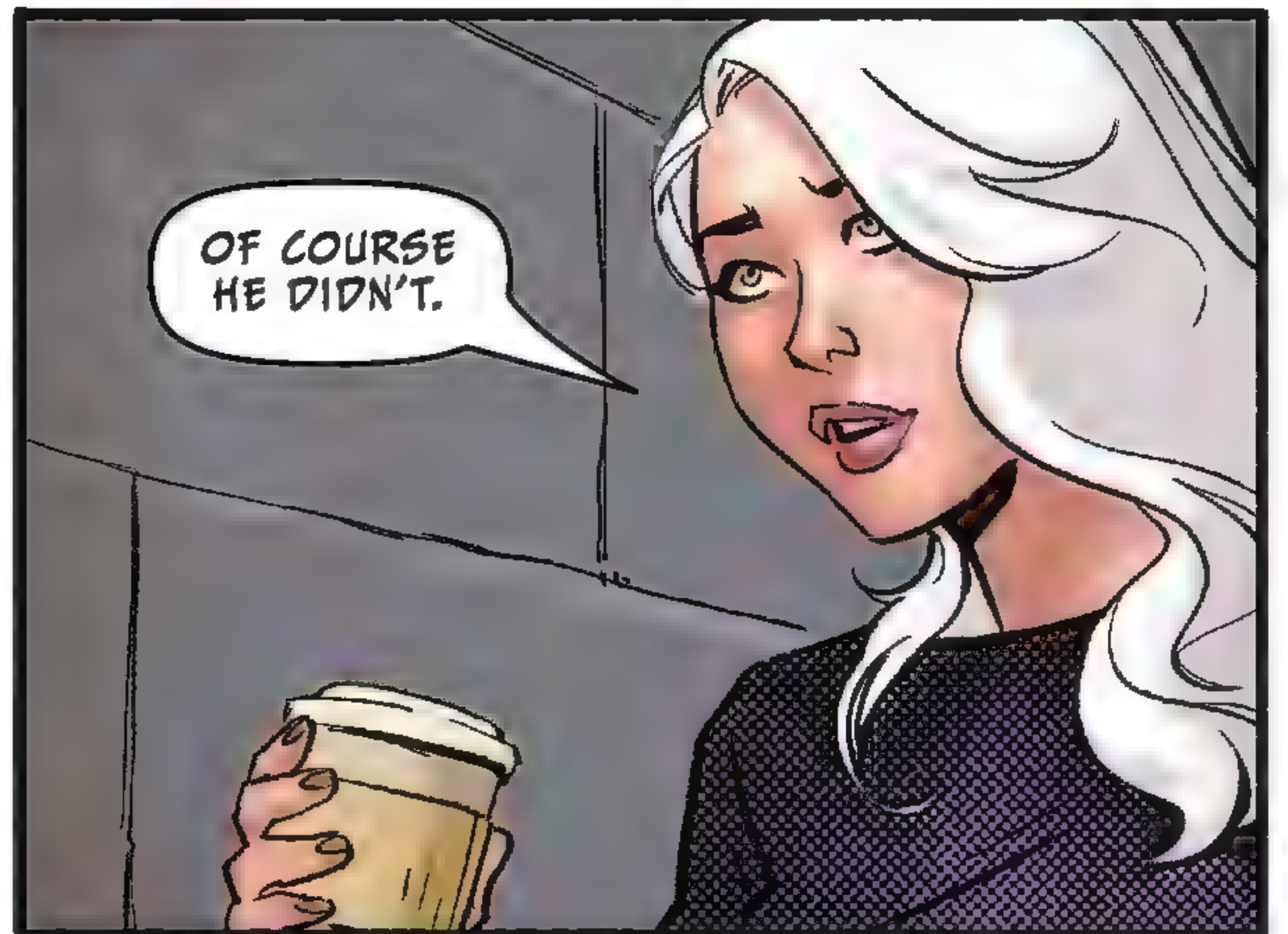
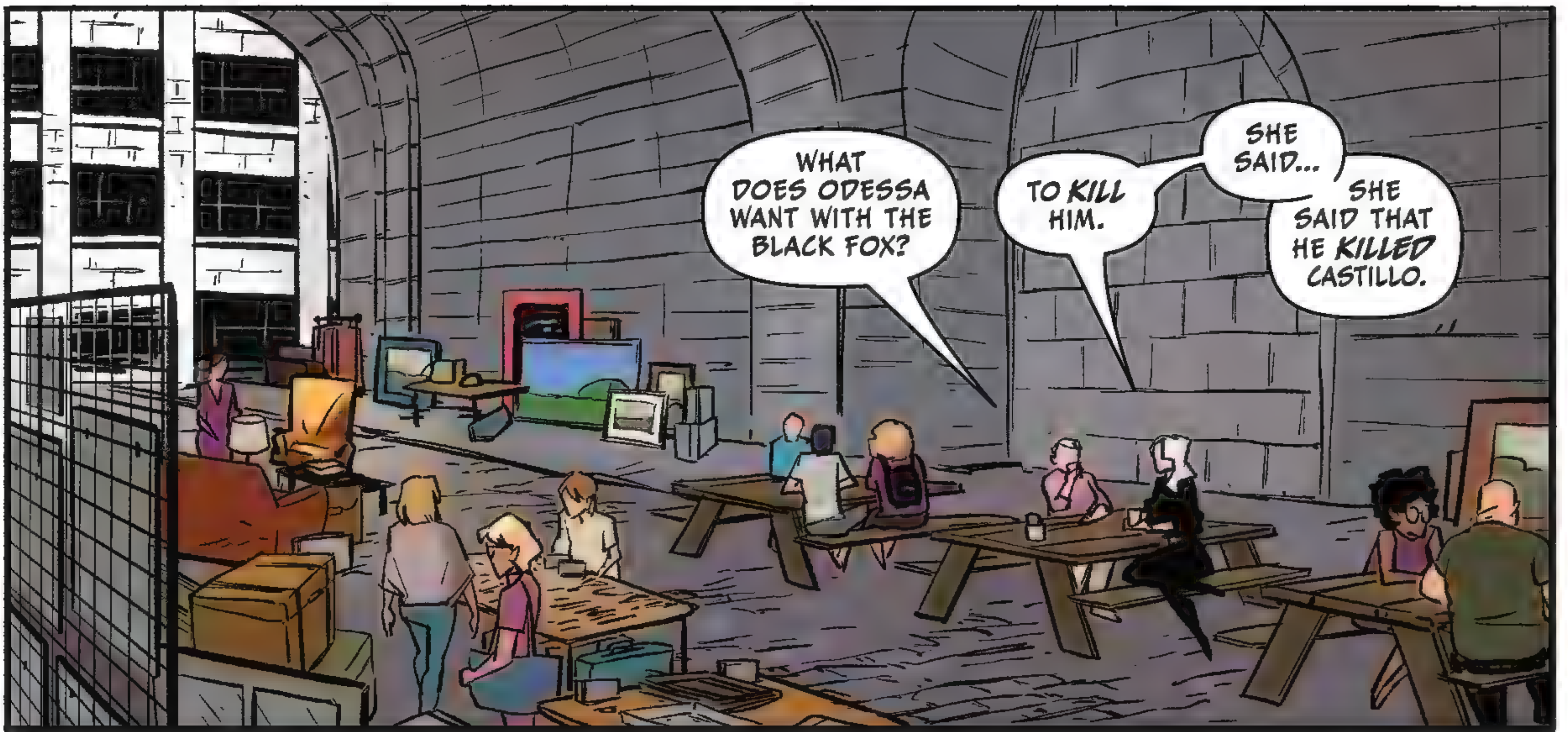
FOR REAL?

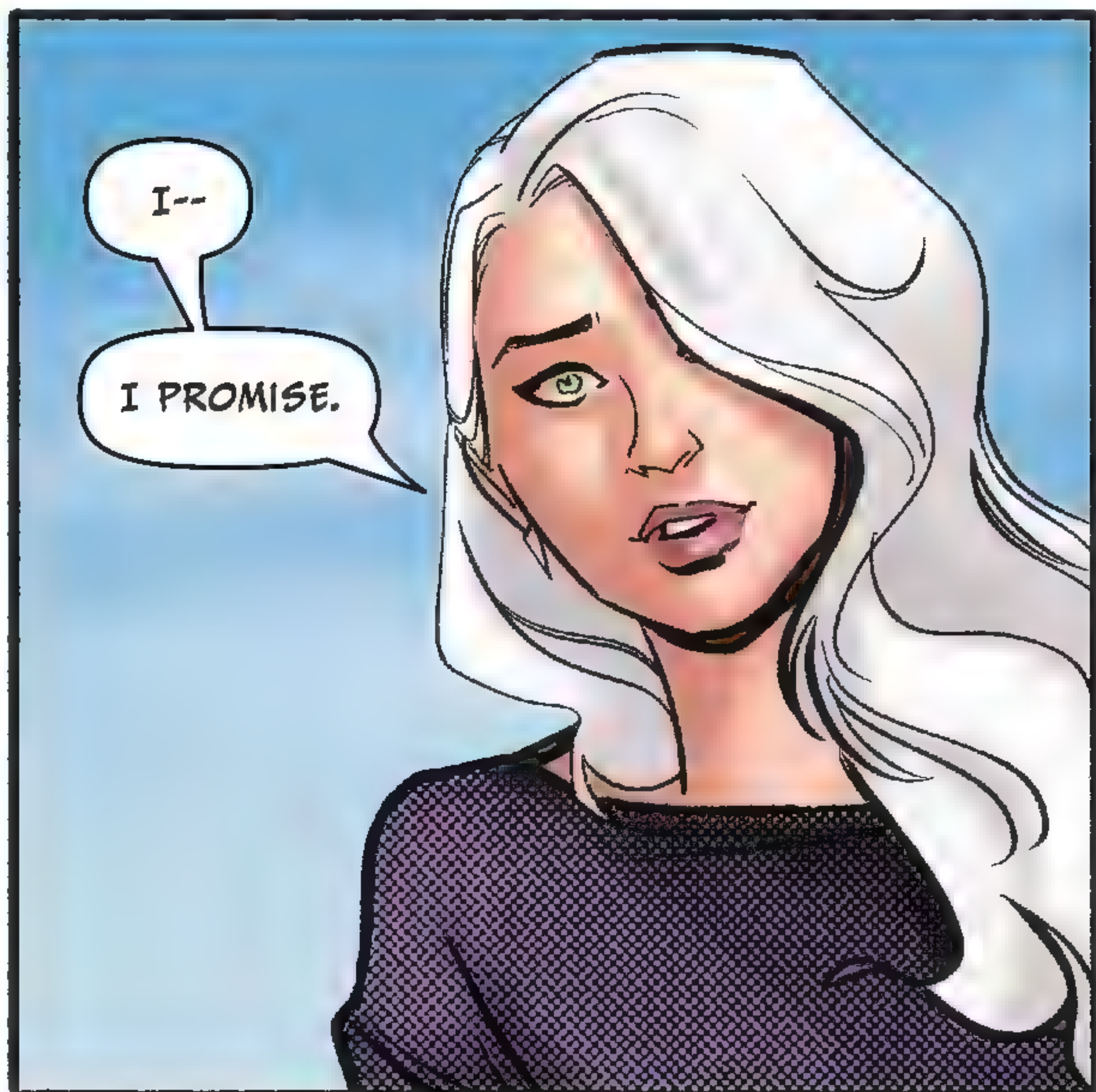
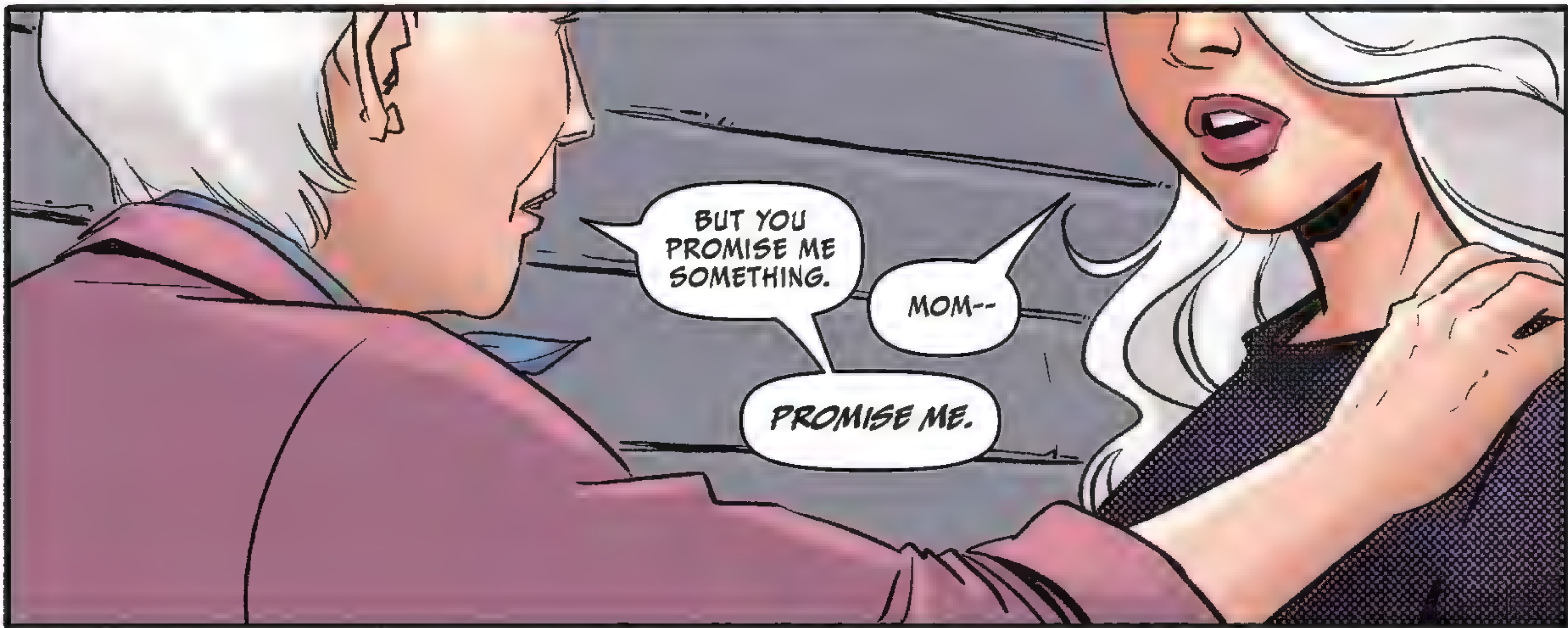
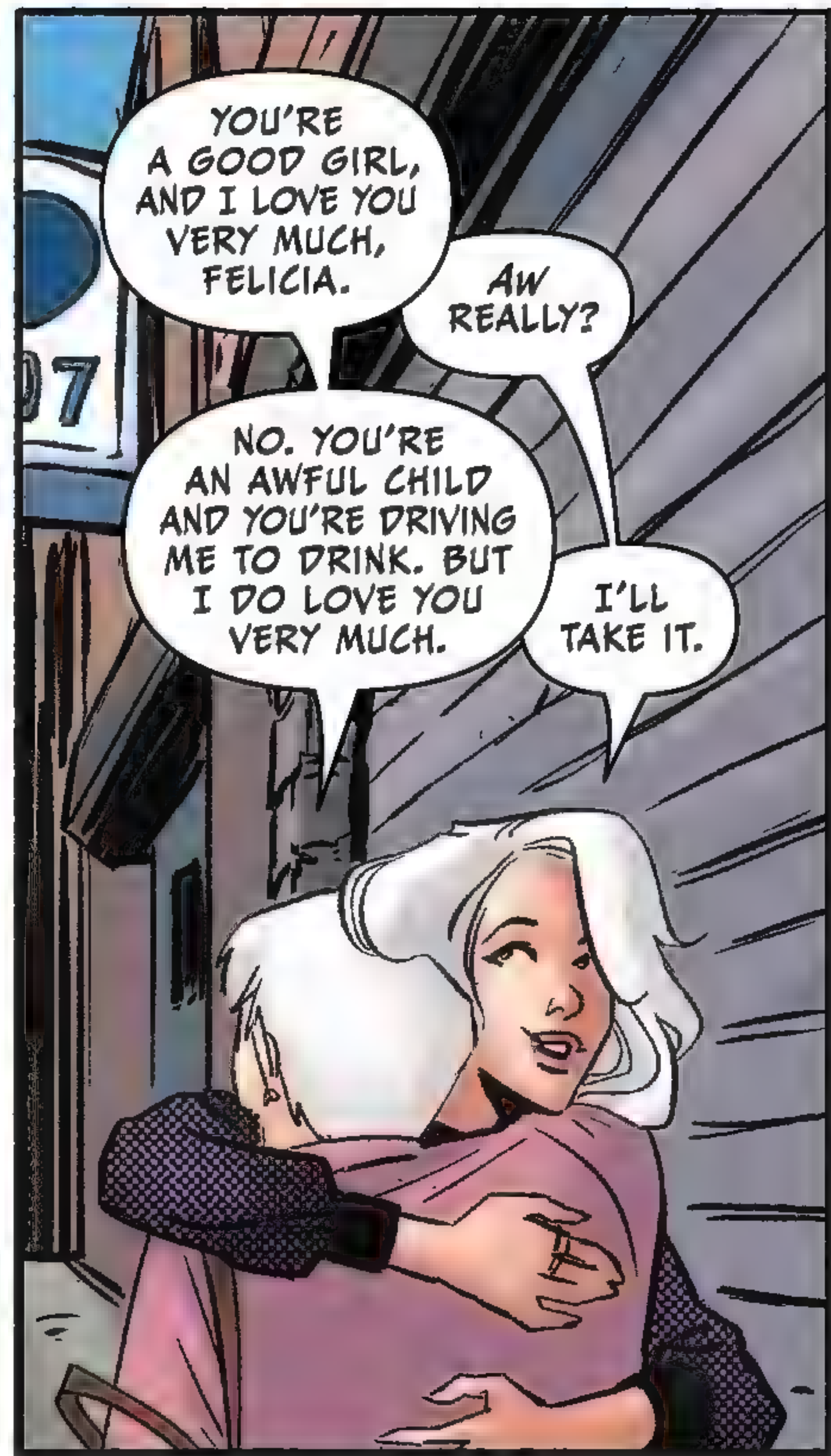


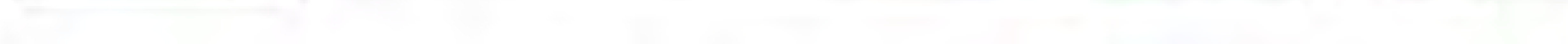
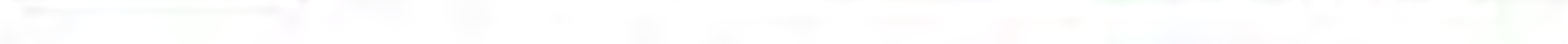
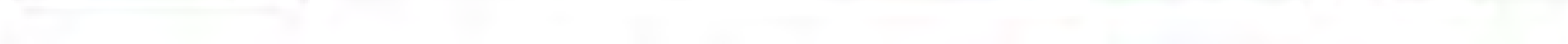
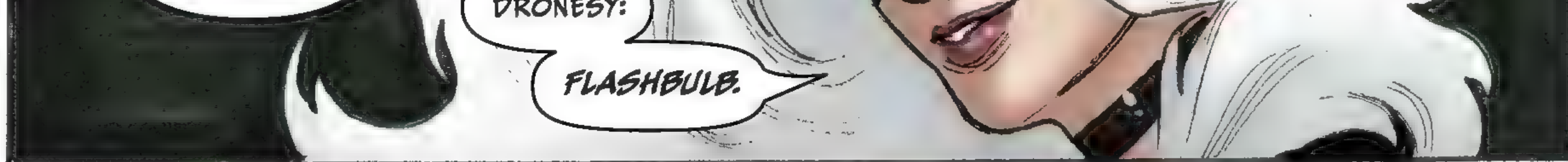
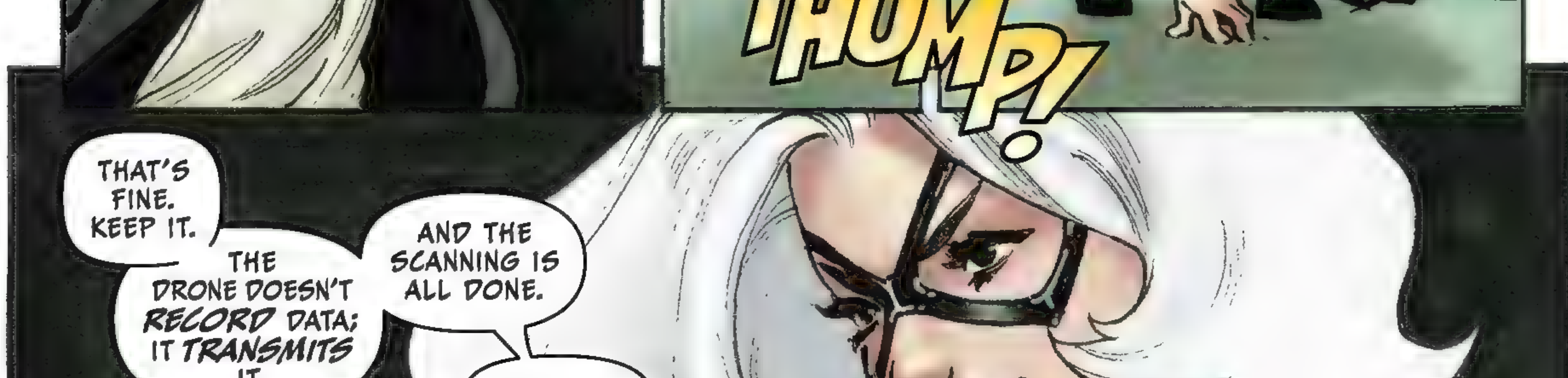
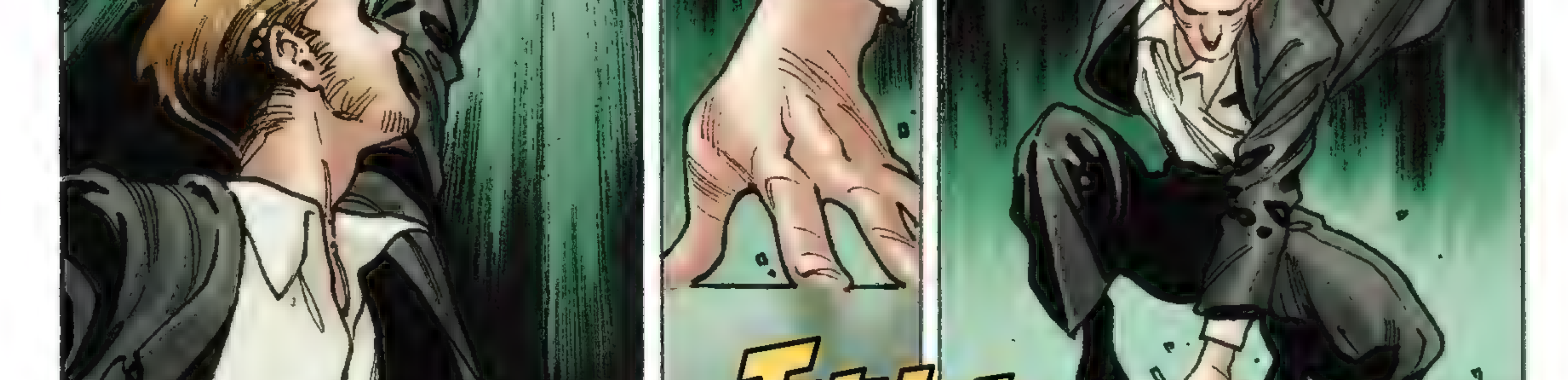
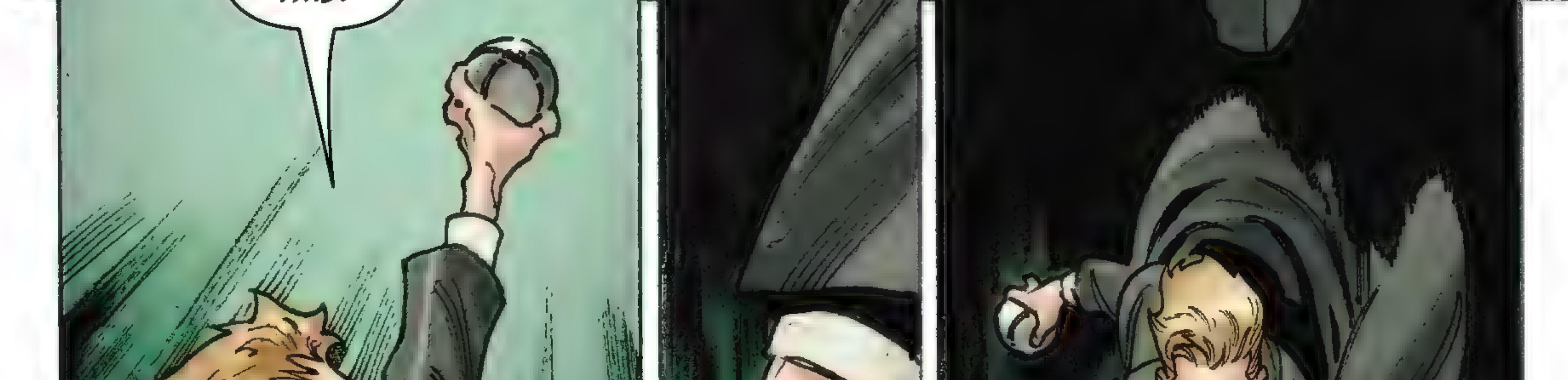
ALWAYS SO
PRETTY
THEY ARE,
AND SO
DUMB...













AGH!

I LIED TO
MY MOM.

I CAN'T
PROMISE
THAT.



I KNOW
WHAT THIS
LIFE IS,
WHAT CAN
HAPPEN.



AND I KNOW THAT ONE DAY,
ONE JOB, MAYBE I WON'T BE
QUITE *CLEVER* ENOUGH, WON'T
BE QUITE *STRONG* ENOUGH.



THAT'S WHY YOU
WANTED TO KNOW
IF MY LENSES WERE
FLASHPROOF?!

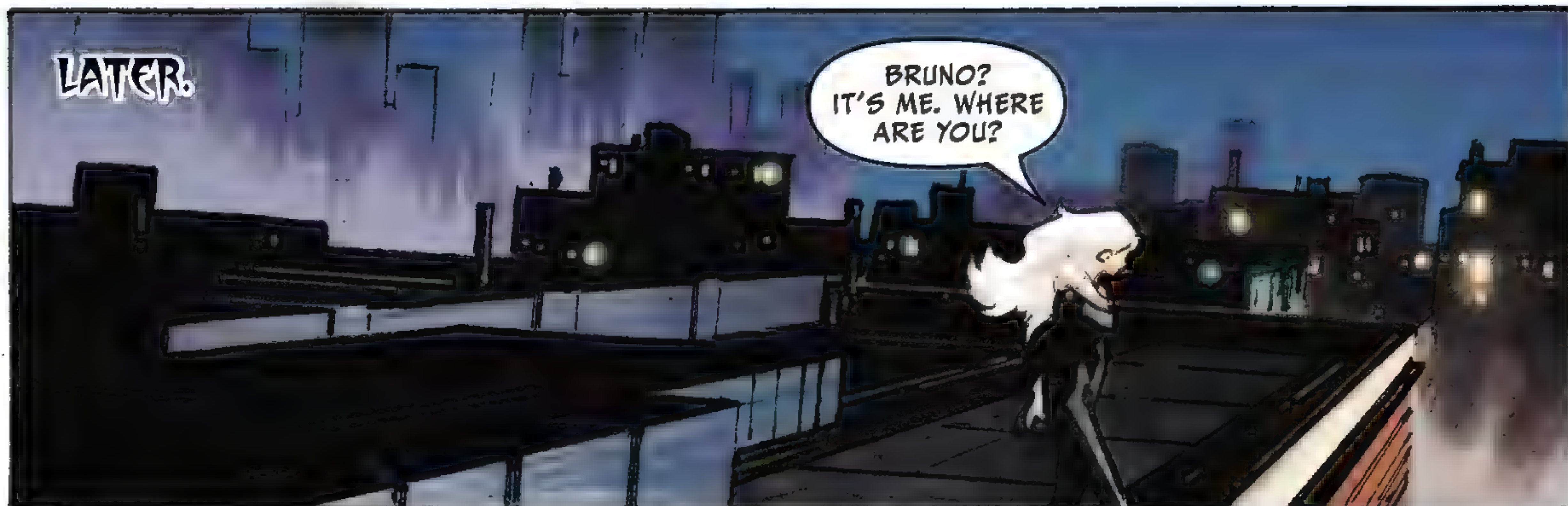
COVERING
THE BASES,
BABE.



BUT I WON'T
GIVE IT UP,
BECAUSE *THIS*
IS WHO I AM.

IT MAY NOT BE
SMART, IT MAY
NOT BE HEALTHY...

...BUT I'M THE
BLACK CAT.

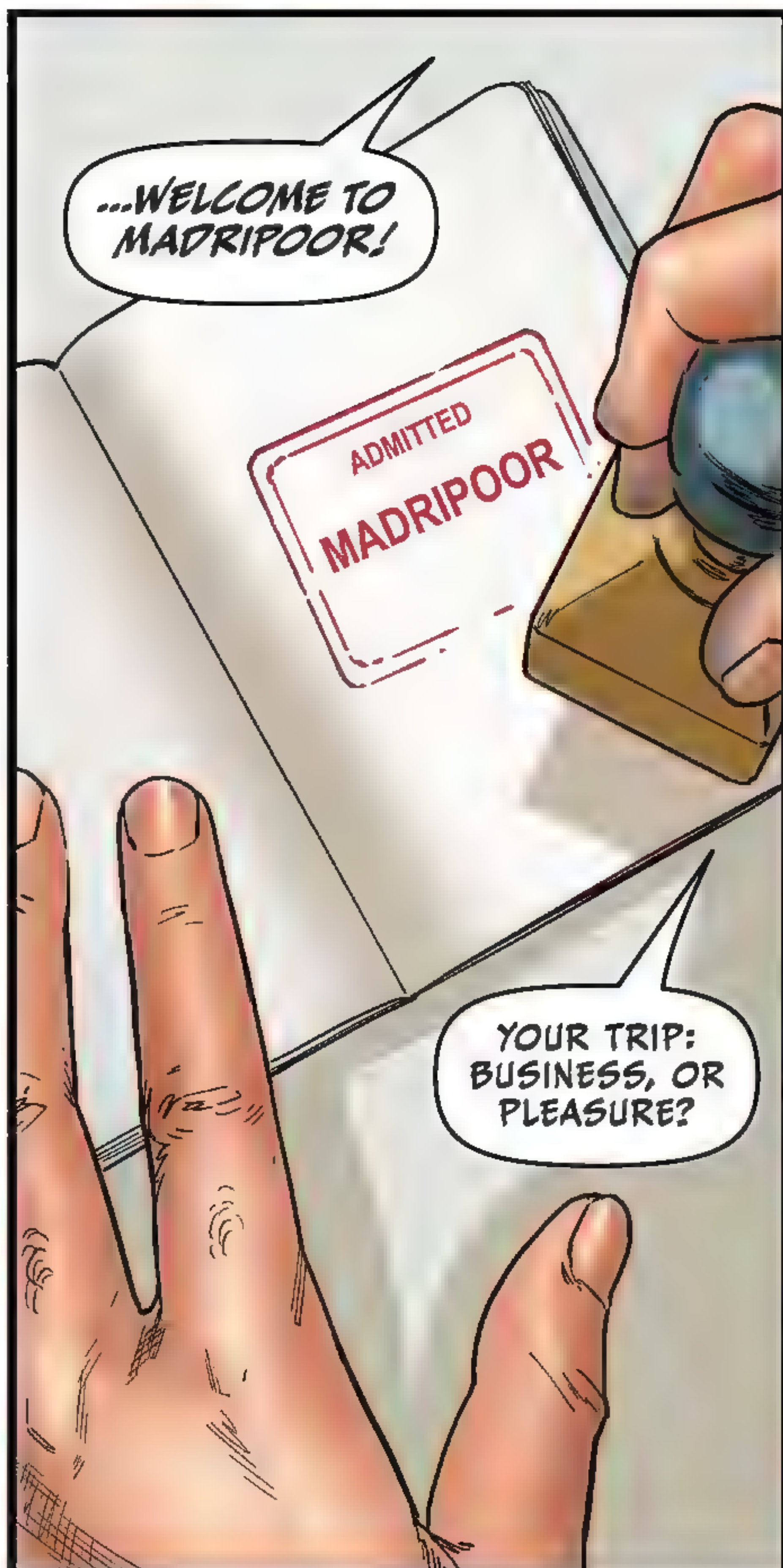


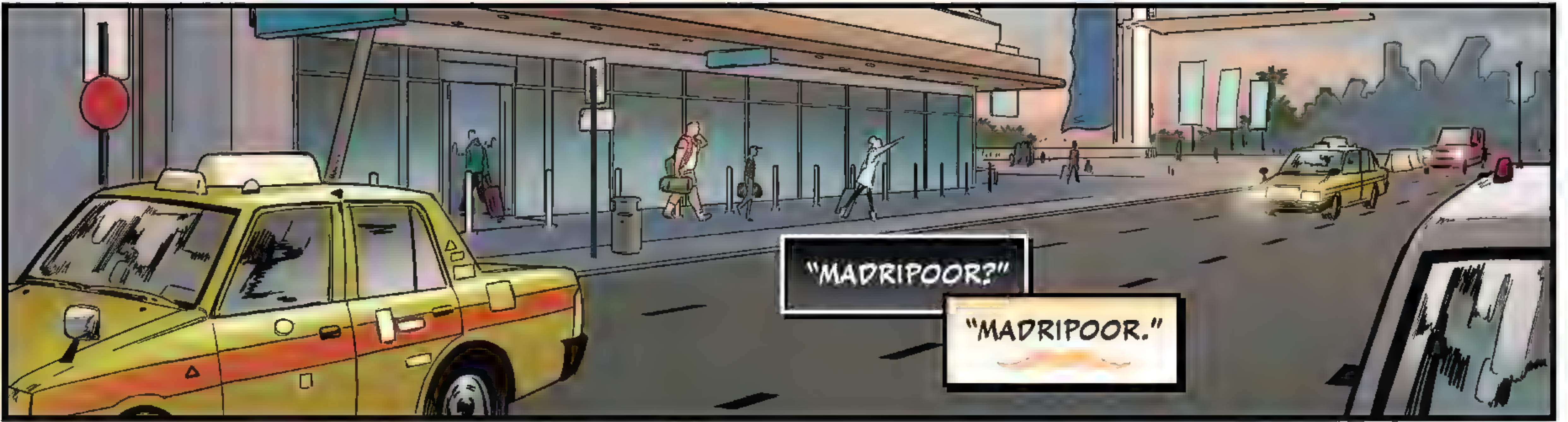
THE HIDEOUT

I THINK IT'S
SAFE TO SAY IT'S
STARTED.



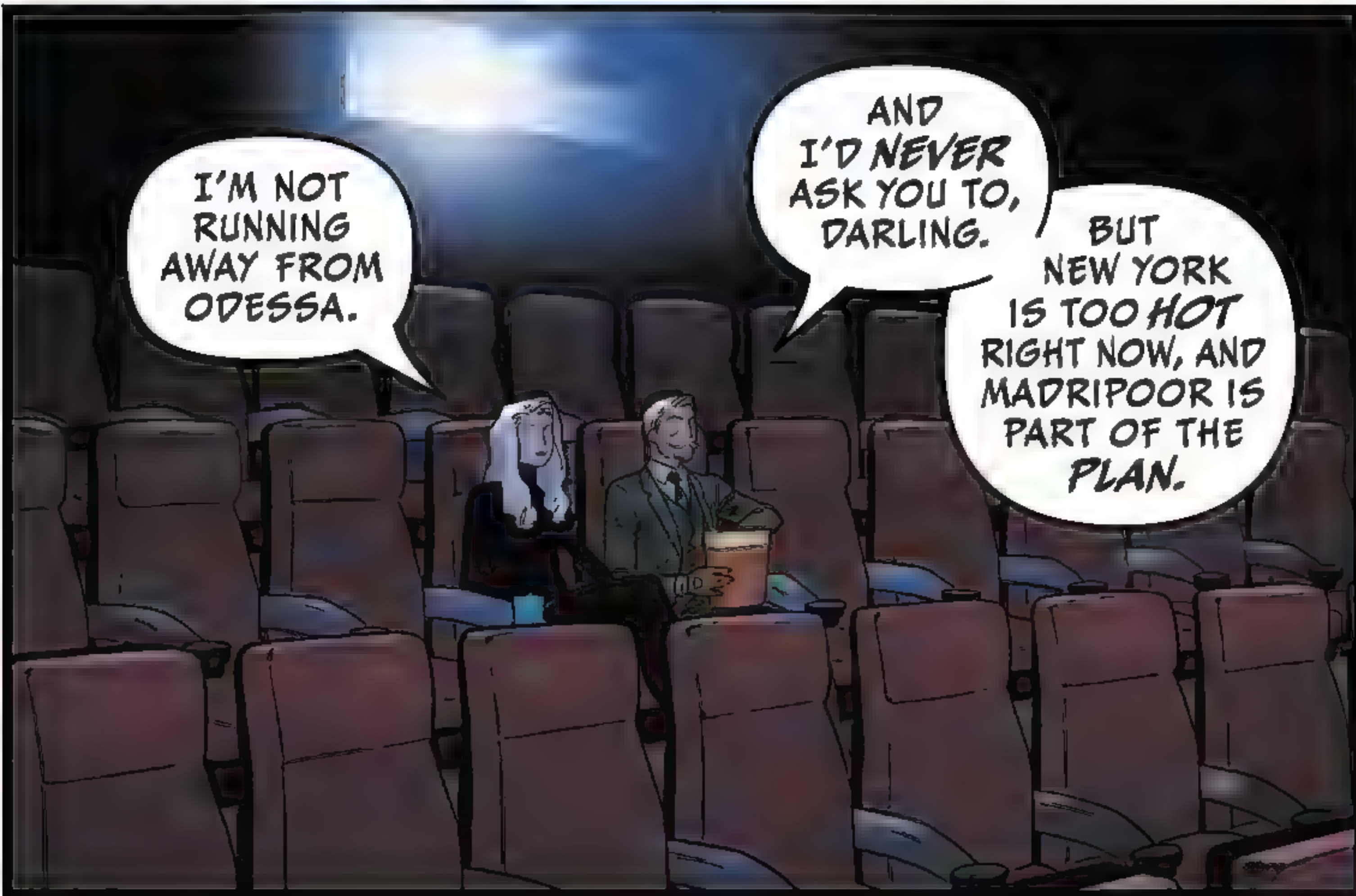






"MADRIPOOR?"

"MADRIPOOR."



I'M NOT
RUNNING
AWAY FROM
ODESSA.

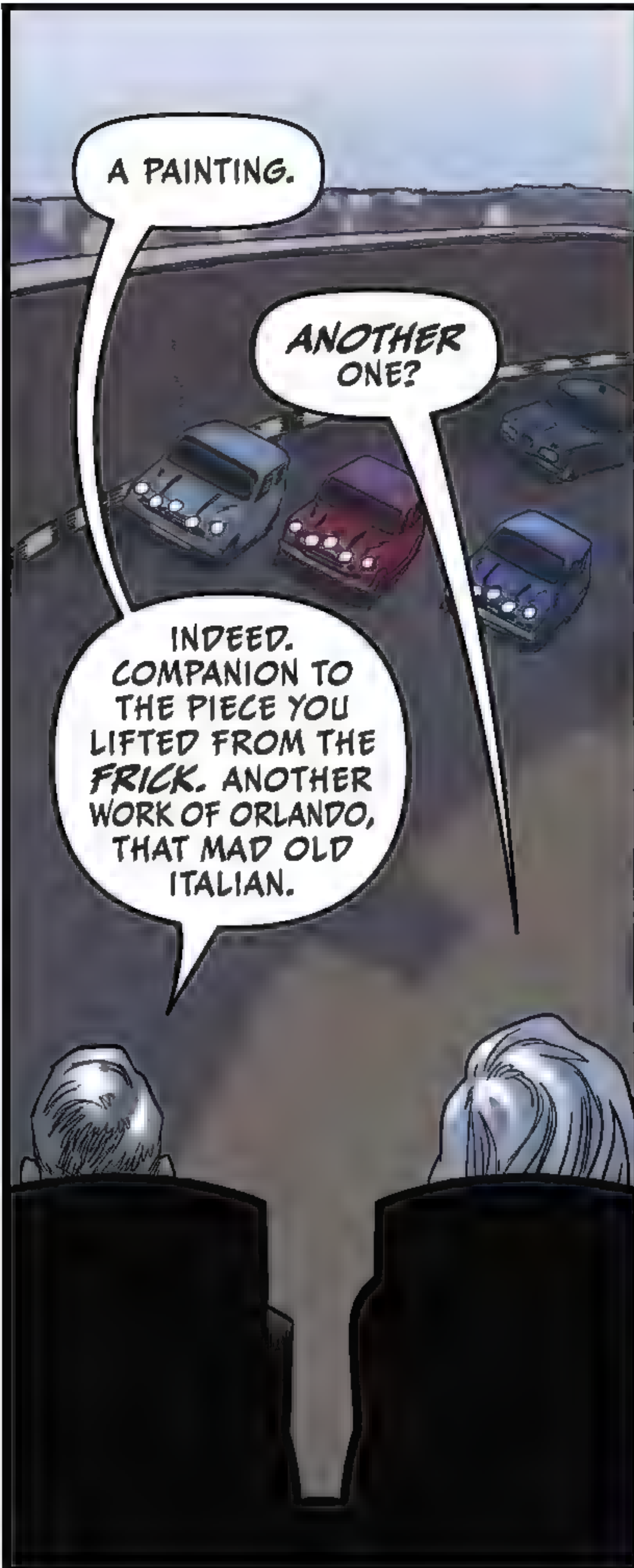
AND
I'D NEVER
ASK YOU TO,
DARLING.

BUT
NEW YORK
IS TOO HOT
RIGHT NOW, AND
MADRIPOOR IS
PART OF THE
PLAN.



"NOW
WE'RE
TALKING.

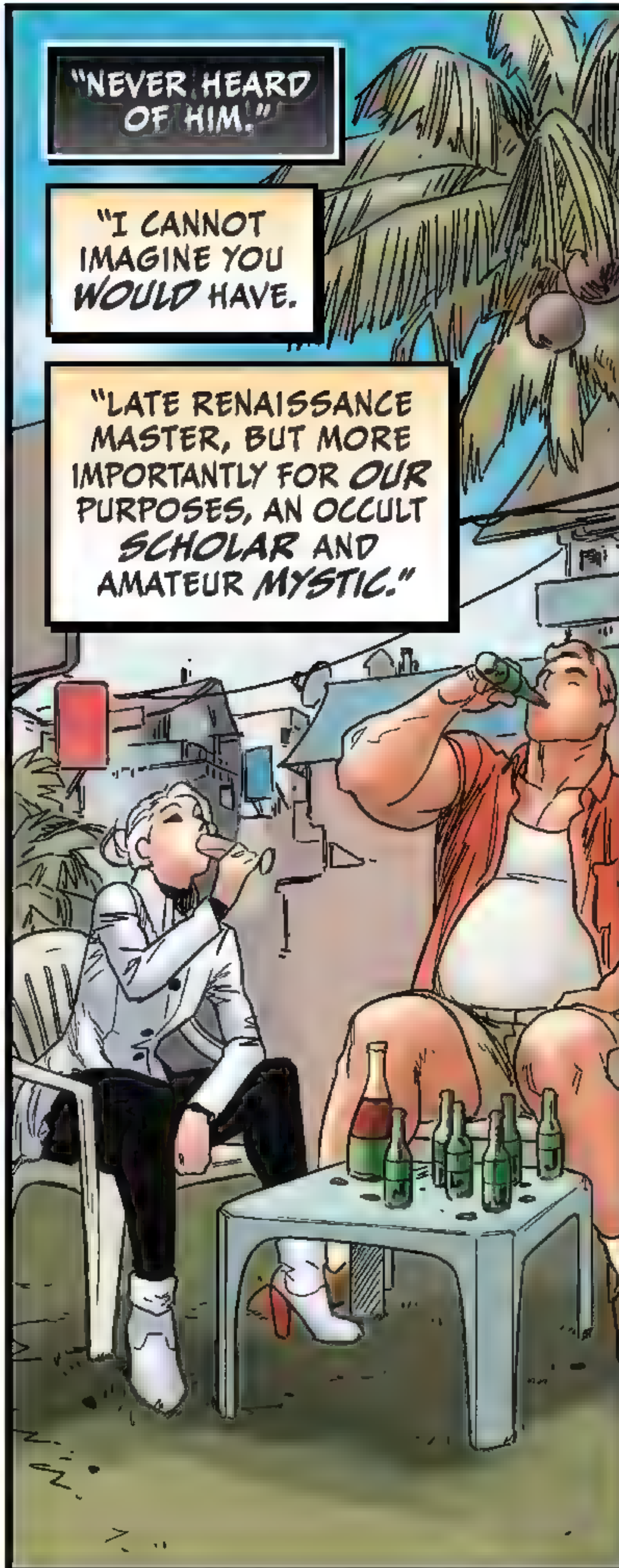
"WHAT'S
THE GIG?"



A PAINTING.

ANOTHER
ONE?

INDEED.
COMPANION TO
THE PIECE YOU
LIFTED FROM THE
FRICK. ANOTHER
WORK OF ORLANDO,
THAT MAD OLD
ITALIAN.



"NEVER HEARD
OF HIM."

"I CANNOT
IMAGINE YOU
WOULD HAVE.

"LATE RENAISSANCE
MASTER, BUT MORE
IMPORTANTLY FOR OUR
PURPOSES, AN OCCULT
SCHOLAR AND
AMATEUR MYSTIC."



THIS ISN'T GOING TO
BE ANOTHER MAGIC
THING, IS IT?

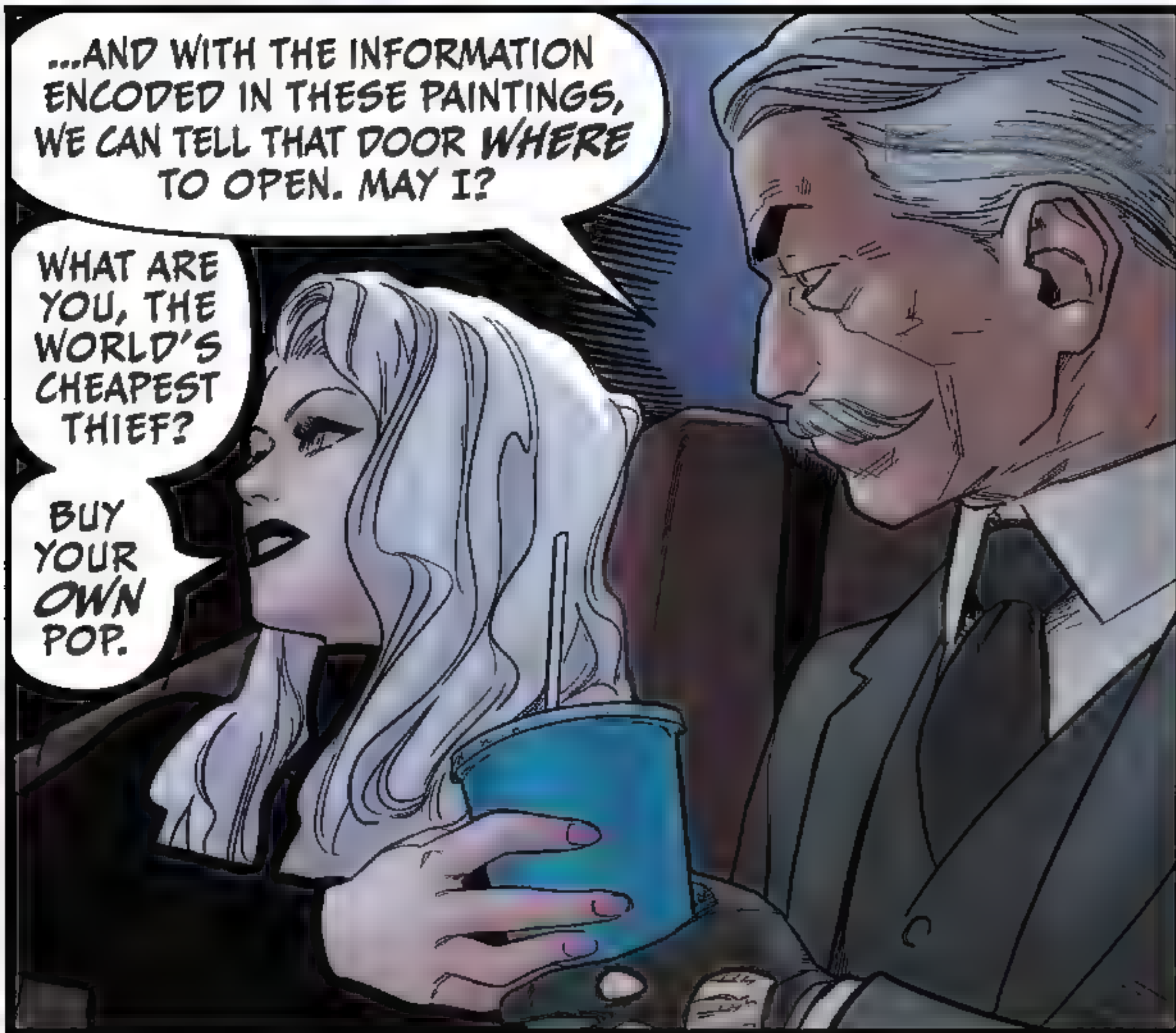
BECAUSE
THE BOYS AND
I GOT A GUTFUL
OF THAT BACK
ON BLEECKER
STREET.

NO. IT WAS
ORLANDO WHO
FIRST MADE
CONTACT WITH THE
OTHER SIDE, WHERE
THE GUILD'S VAULTS
WOULD LATER BE
LOCATED.



"LET ME GUESS. HE HID THAT INFORMATION IN HIS PAINTINGS."

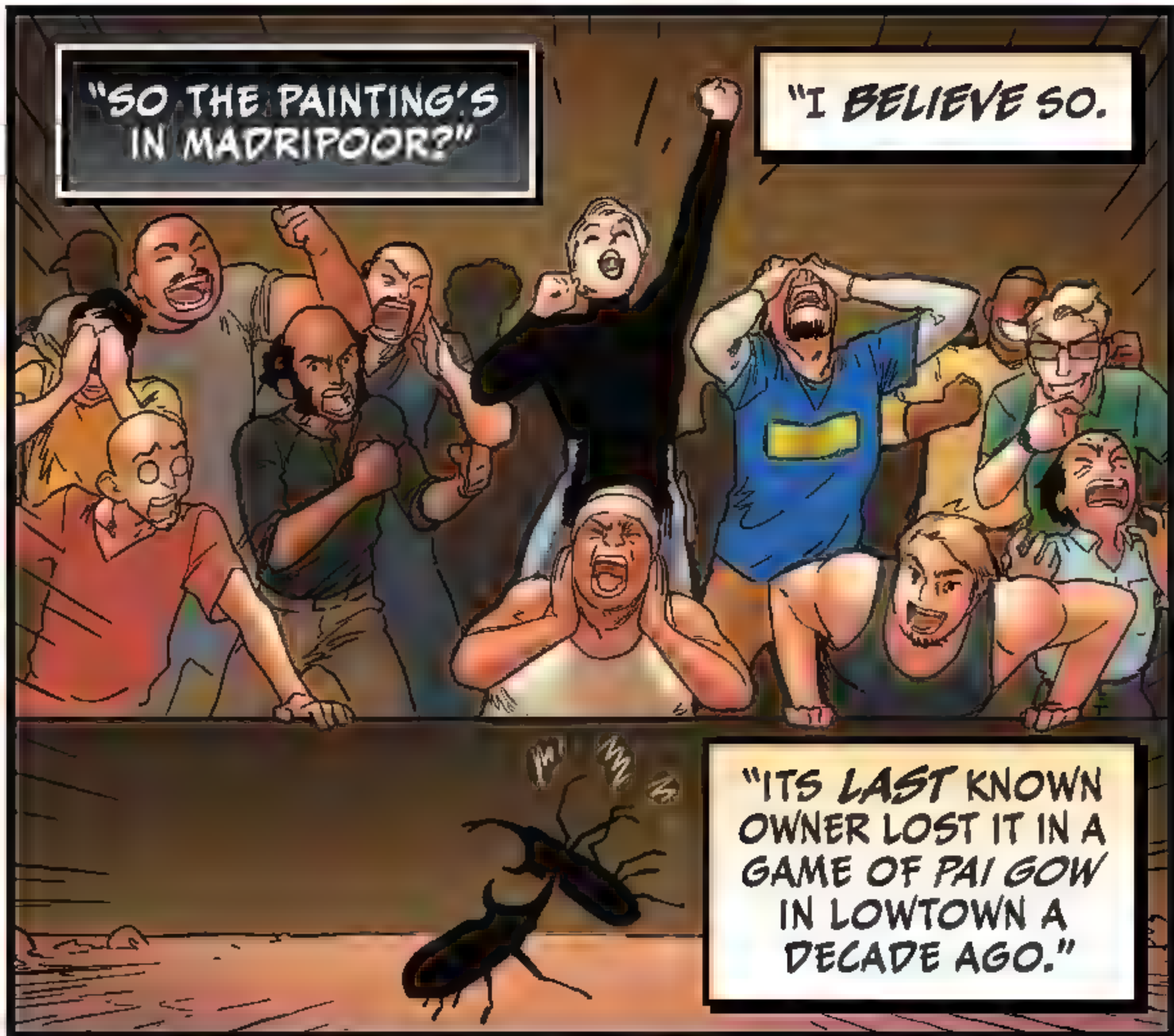
"PRECISELY. WE HAVE A **DOOR** IN THE **RANDALL DEVICE...**"



...AND WITH THE INFORMATION ENCODED IN THESE PAINTINGS, WE CAN TELL THAT **DOOR** *WHERE* TO OPEN. MAY I?

WHAT ARE YOU, THE WORLD'S CHEAPEST THIEF?

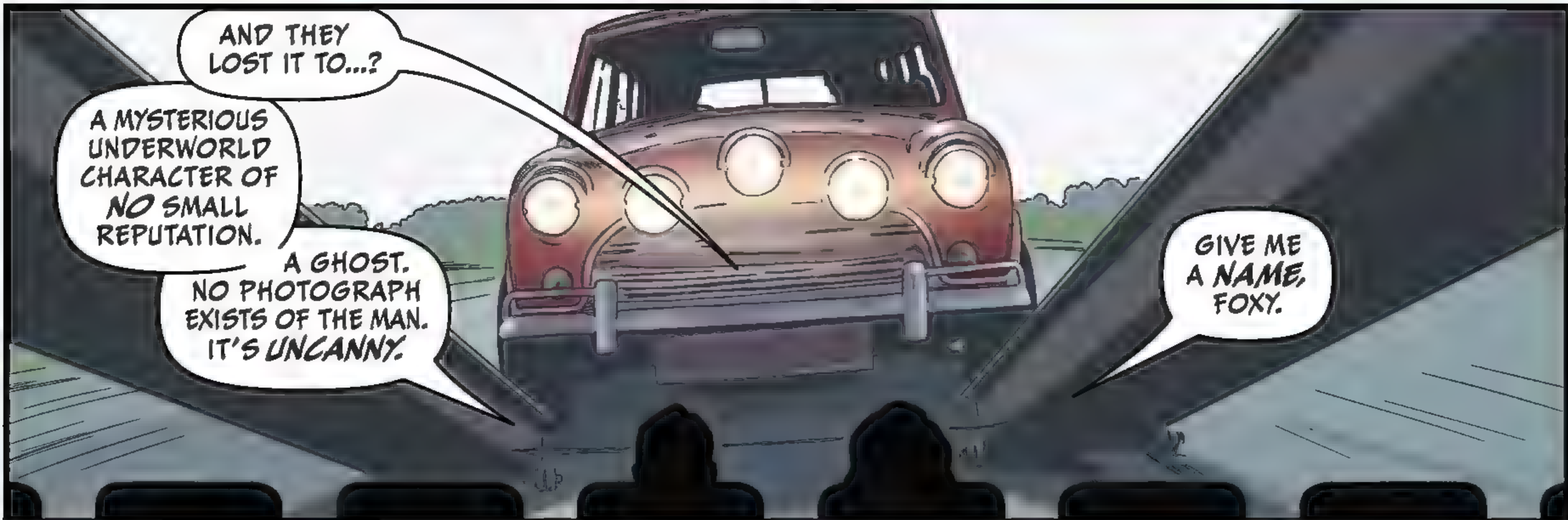
BUY YOUR OWN POP.



"SO THE PAINTING'S IN MADRIPPOOR?"

"I BELIEVE SO."

"ITS **LAST KNOWN** OWNER LOST IT IN A GAME OF **PAI GOW** IN **LOWTOWN** A **DECADE** AGO."



AND THEY LOST IT TO...?

A MYSTERIOUS UNDERWORLD CHARACTER OF **NO SMALL** REPUTATION.

A GHOST. NO PHOTOGRAPH EXISTS OF THE MAN. IT'S **UNCANNY**.

GIVE ME A NAME, FOXY.



"PATCH."

"MR. PATCH."



THEN ALL I NEED TO DO IS TRACK THIS MR. PATCH DOWN AND RIP HIM OFF.

DO YOU THINK IT WILL BE THAT SIMPLE?

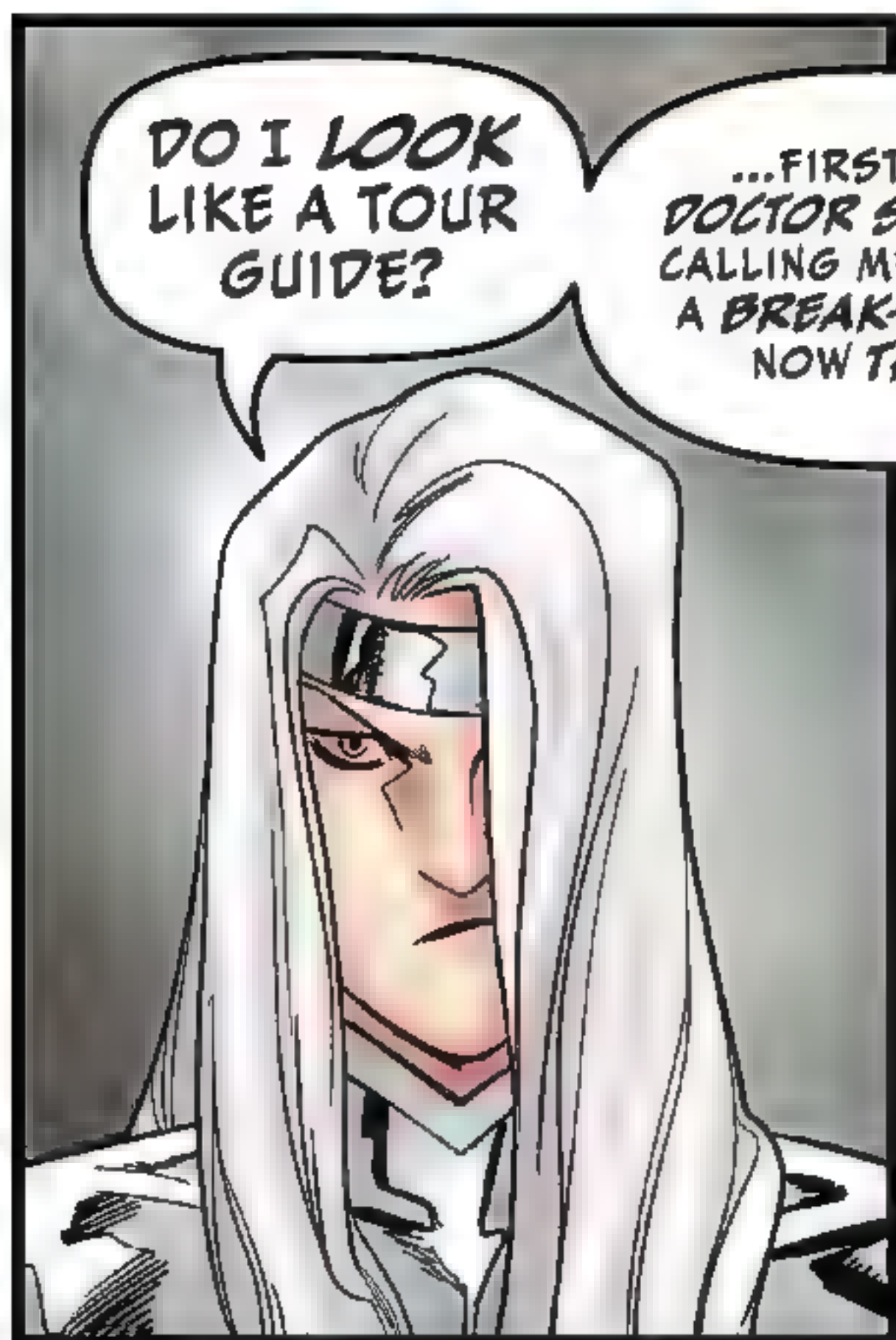
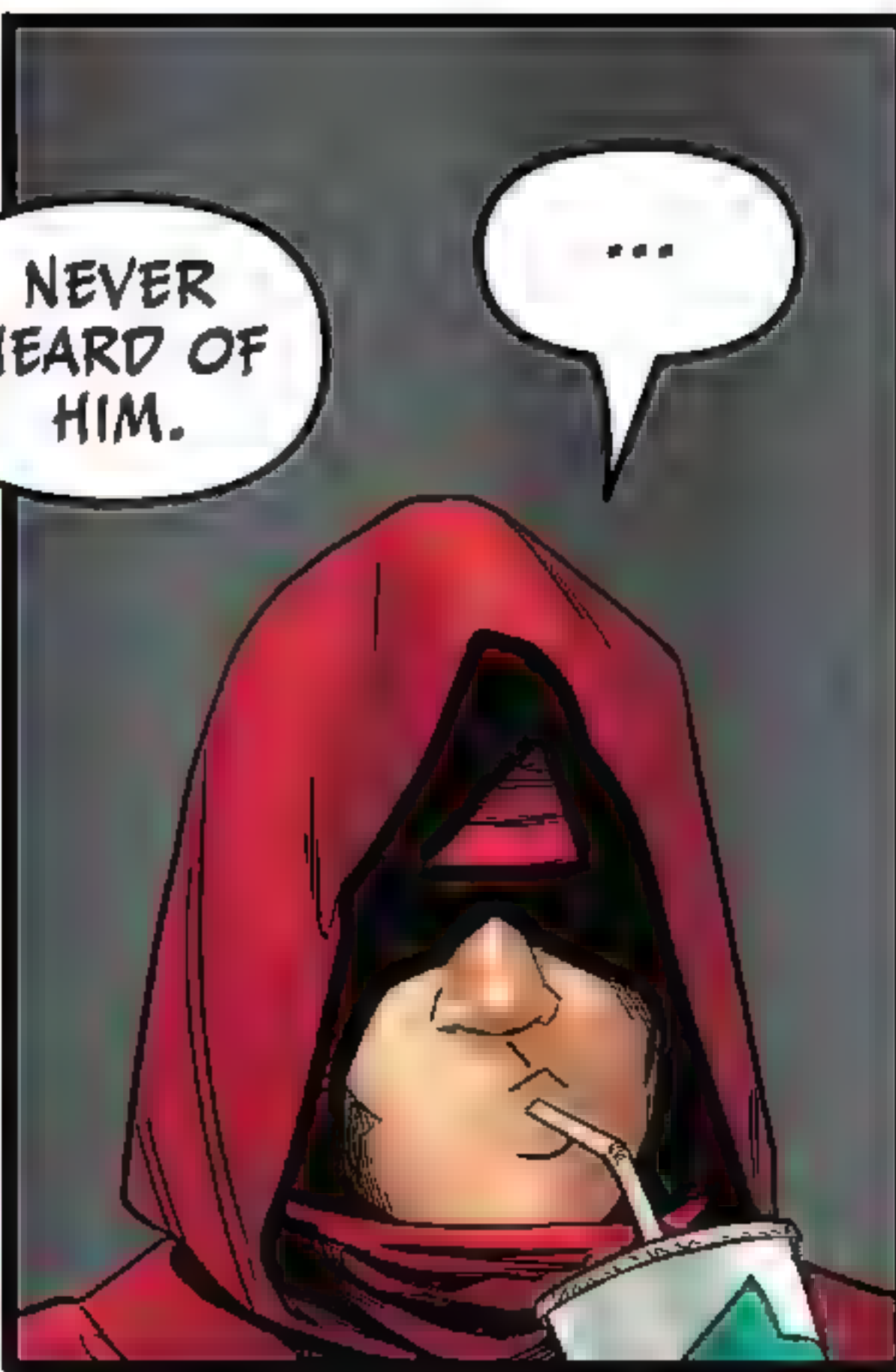
NO PROBLEM...



PATCH?

NEVER HEARD OF HIM.

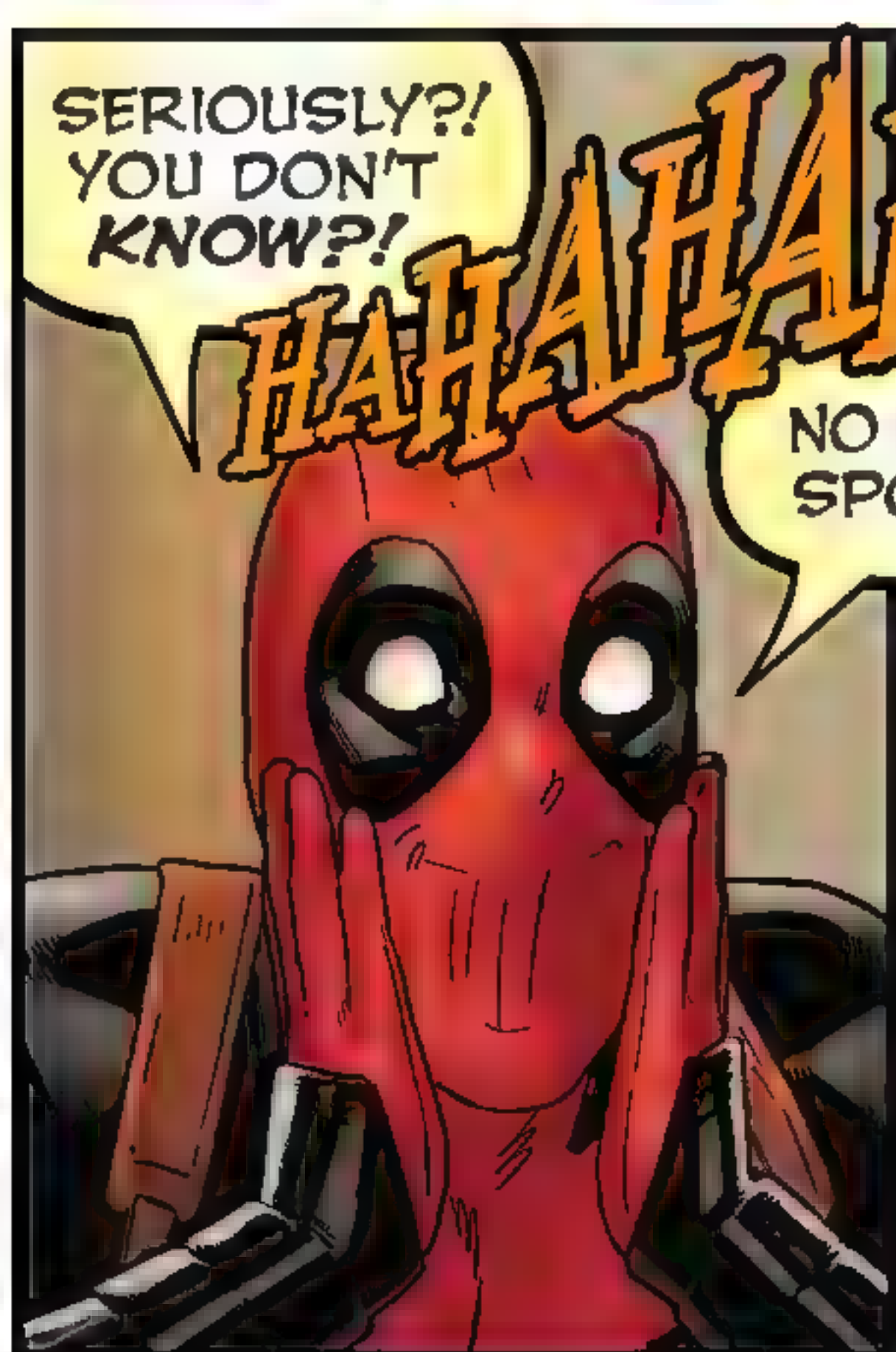
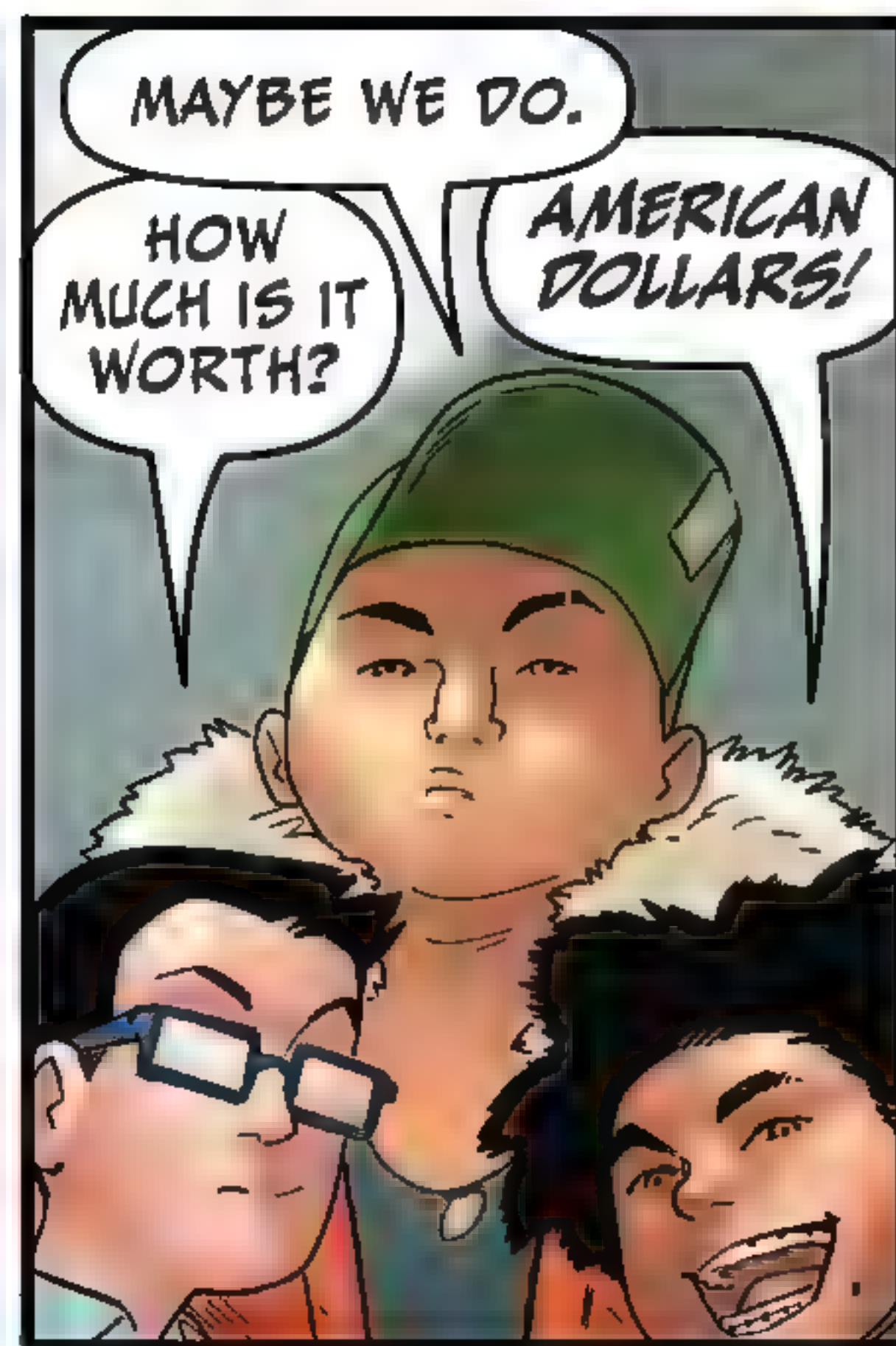
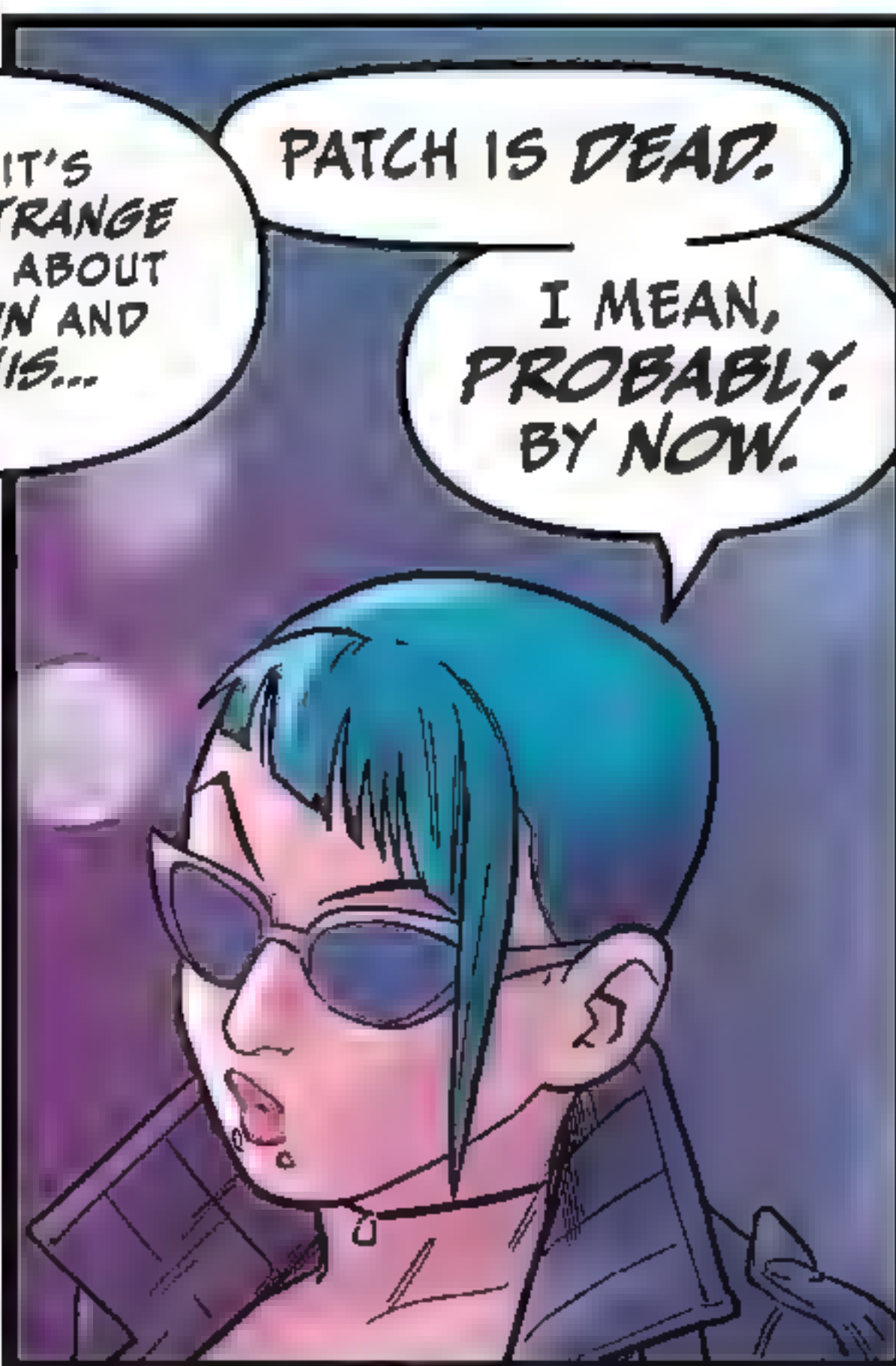
...

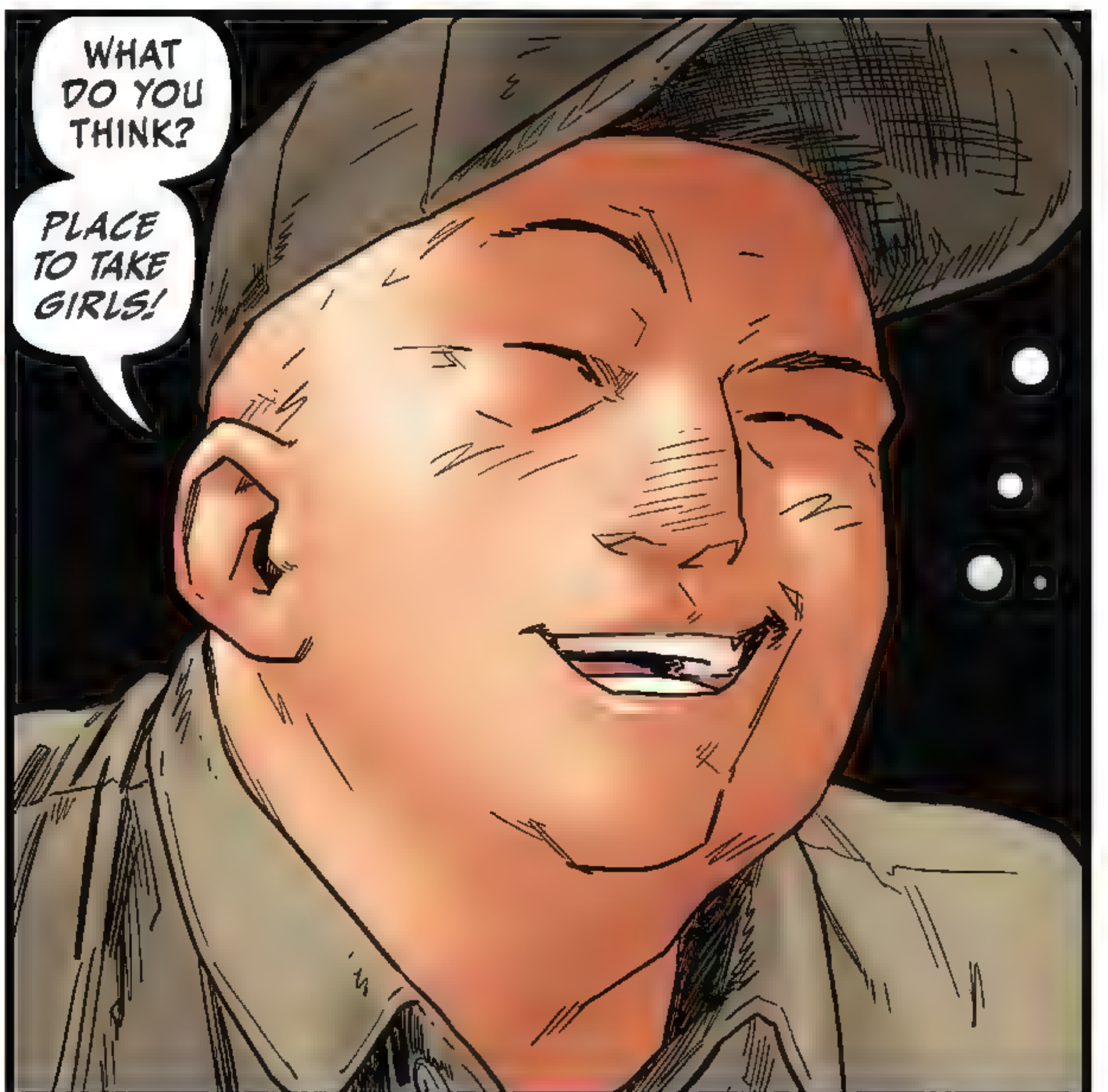
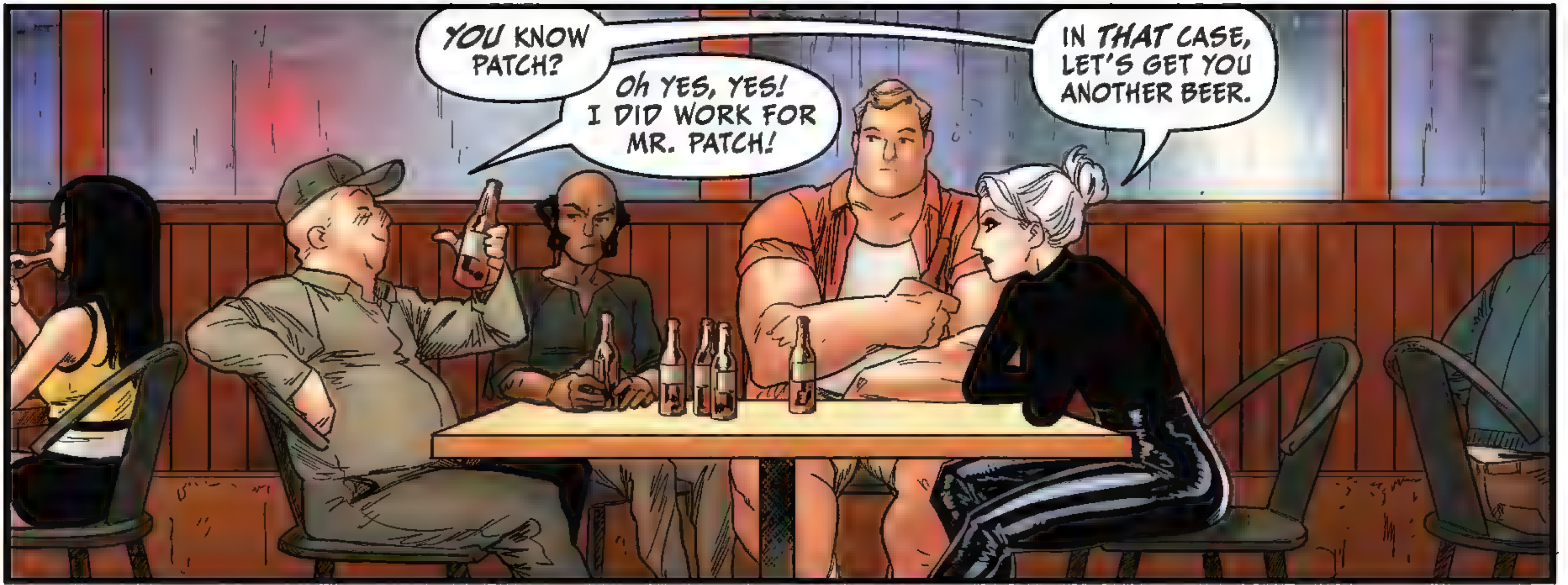


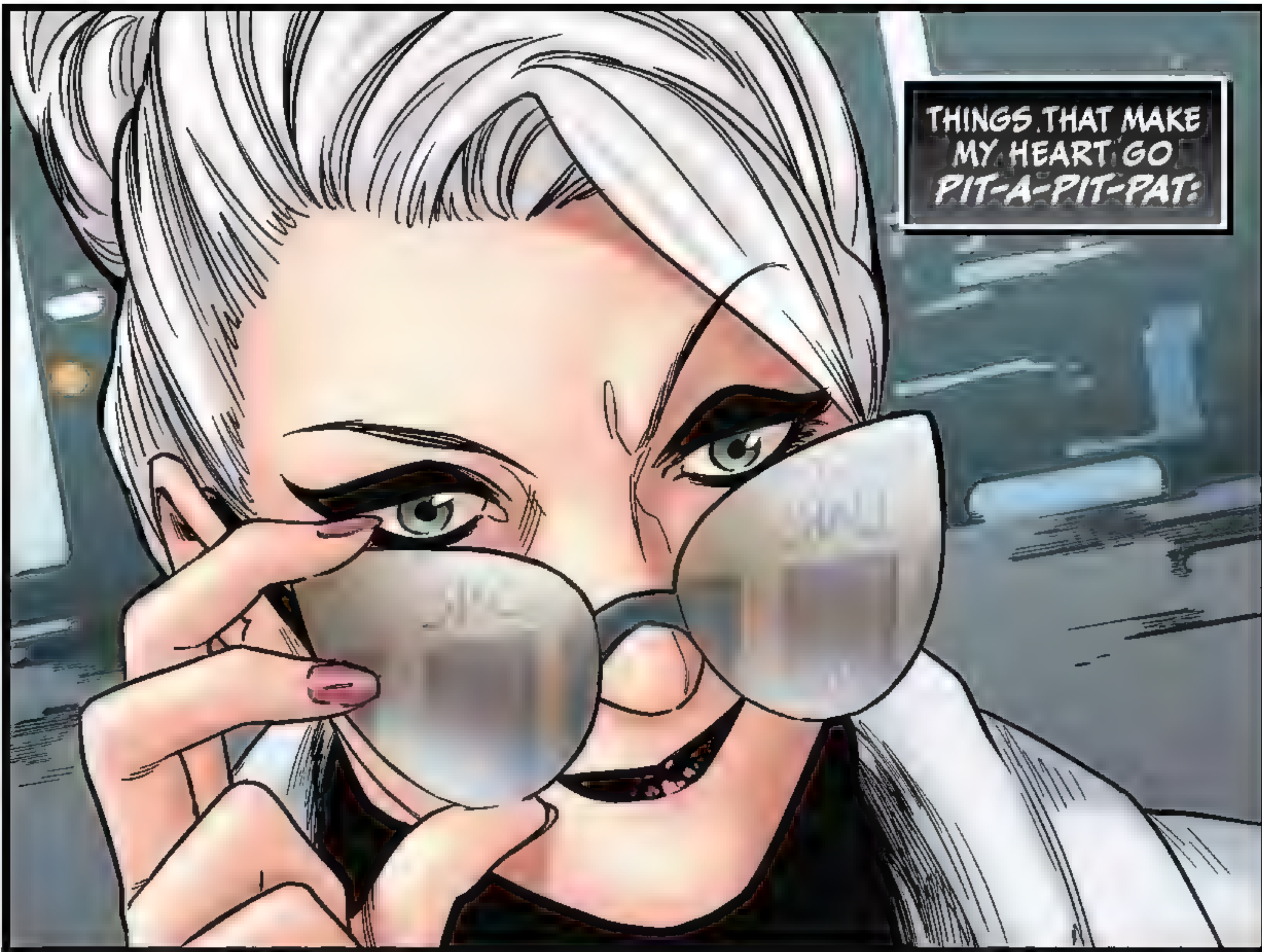
...FIRST IT'S DOCTOR STRANGE CALLING ME ABOUT A BREAK-IN AND NOW THIS...

PATCH IS DEAD.

I MEAN, PROBABLY. BY NOW.











...NOTHING?



THOUGHT
THAT SEEMED
TOO EASY...

FIGURES.



THAT GUY MUST HAVE
BEEN DINING OUT ON
THAT STORY FOR AGES.

NO BIG SURPRISE
THAT SOMEONE
GOT HERE FIRST.

WELL,
WELL.



FANCY
MEETING YOU
HERE...

NO WAY--!



...FELICIA.

NOW
TELL ME,
DARLIN'...

DID YOU
CLEAN ME
OUT?



Oh FOR--
SERIOUSLY?

YOU'RE
MR. PATCH?

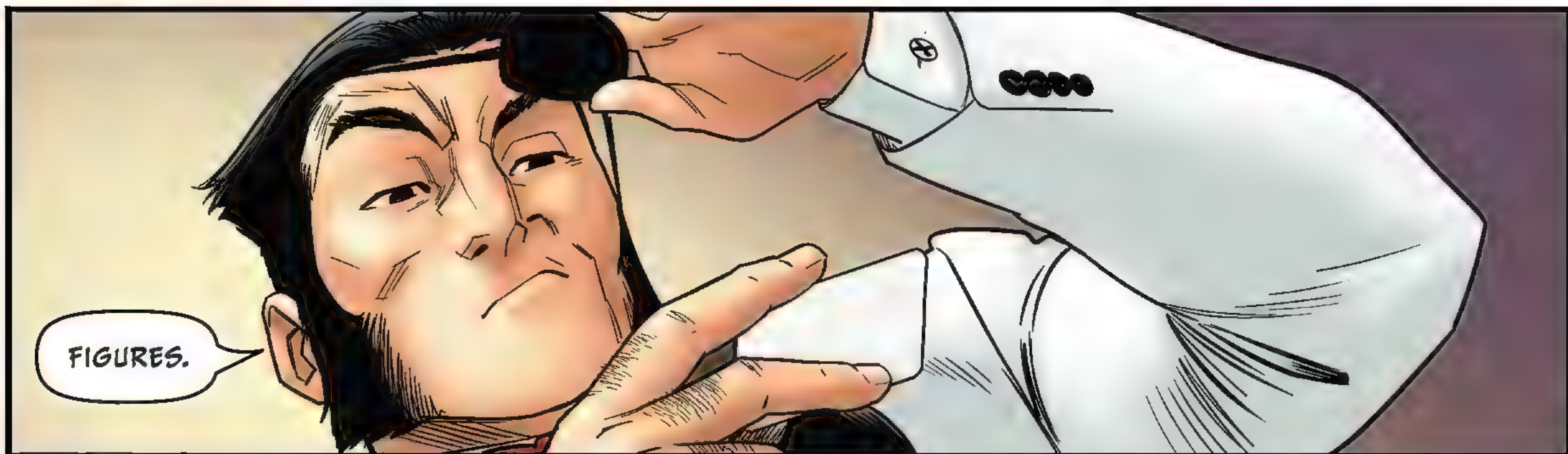
YOU
GOT TO BE
KIDDING ME
WITH THIS.



AND NO,
I DIDN'T RIP
YOU OFF.

SOMEONE
BEAT ME TO IT.

Tap!



FIGURES.



KADE
KILGORE.

THE POOR
LITTLE RICH
KID?

GAO MOVING
A Wholly Owned Subsidiary of
KILGORE ARMS



YEAH.
TWEEN
PSYCHO.

HE USED
TO RUN THE
HELLFIRE CLUB,
AND NOW HE'S
MOVING ON
MADRIPOOR.

KID PRETTY
MUCH *EXISTS*
TO GET UP MY
NOSE. *THIS* IS
HIM TAKING A
POKE AT ME.



SPEAKING
OF WHICH...

...I'M LOOKING
FOR A PAINTING.
OLD MASTER, LATE
RENAISSANCE.

WORD HAS
IT YOU WON IT
IN A GAME OF
PAI GOW?



YEAH. I
GOT THAT ONE.
OR DID. HELL
OF A GAME.

BUT IF
YOU'RE LOOKING
FOR THE PAINTING,
IT'S AS GONE AS
THE REST OF
MY STUFF.



LOGAN,
BABY.

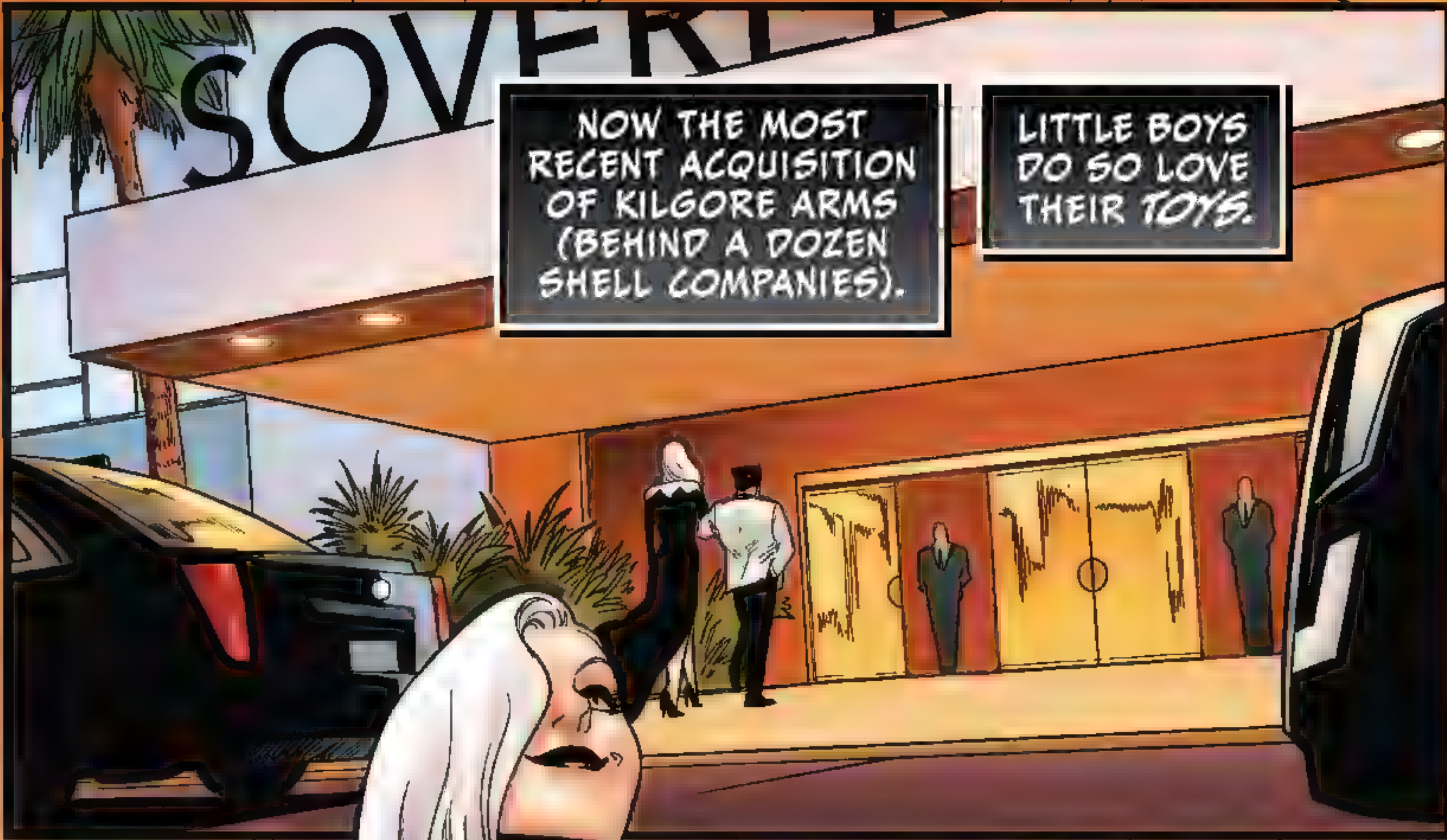
I WANT
THAT PAINTING.
I'M GOING TO
GET THAT
PAINTING.





THE SOVEREIGN
HOTEL, IN
HIGHTOWN.

BEST IN
MADRIPOOR.
SOME SAY
THE BEST IN
THE WORLD.



NOW THE MOST
RECENT ACQUISITION
OF KILGORE ARMS
(BEHIND A DOZEN
SHELL COMPANIES).

LITTLE BOYS
DO SO LOVE
THEIR TOYS.



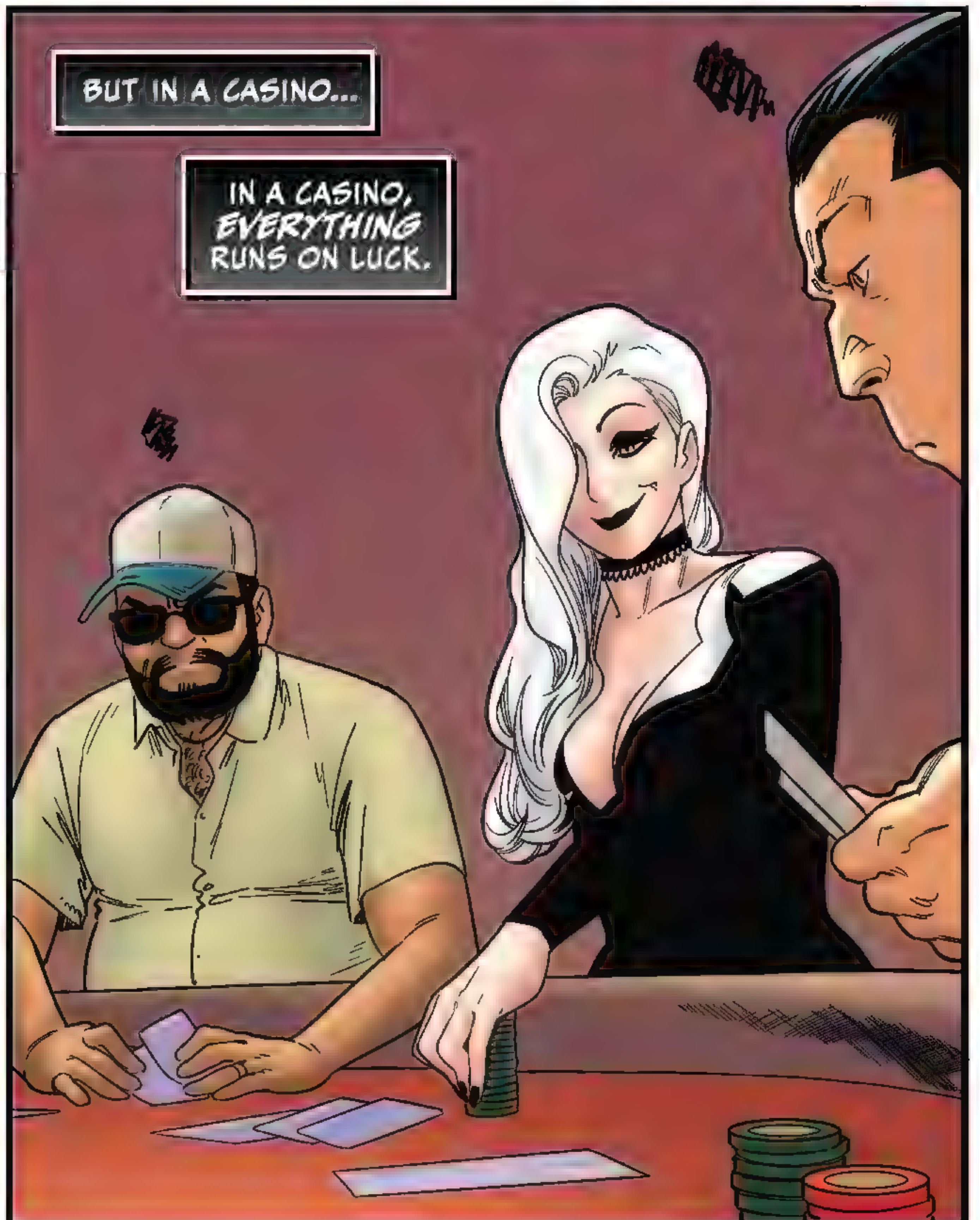
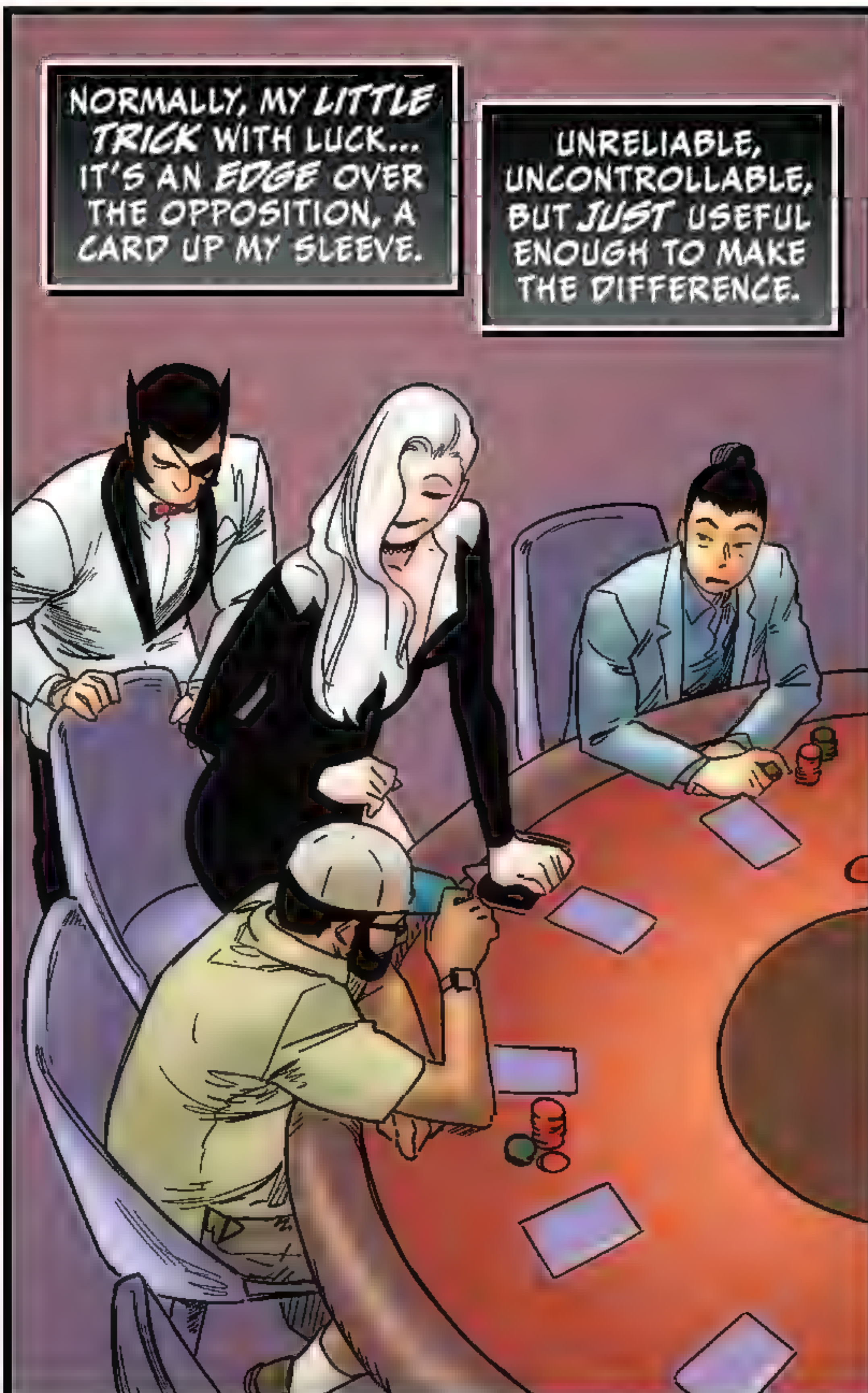
HE'LL HAVE
YOUR THINGS
ON DISPLAY.
PENTHOUSE,
MY BET.

HE'LL
WANT THEM
AROUND HIM,
TO FEEL LIKE
HE'S WON.

BUT HOW DO
YOU FIGURE WE
GET TO HIM?

I CAN'T
CUT MY WAY
UP THERE.





A MULTIMILLION-DOLLAR BUSINESS, BALANCED ON A RAZOR BLADE OF CHANCE AND LIKELIHOOD.

PLAY THOSE TOWERING ODDS RIGHT, AND THE HOUSE MAKES A KILLING. ODDS EXACTLY CALCULATED FOR PROFIT.

THE HOUSE ALWAYS WINS, RIGHT? EVENTUALLY?

THAT'S BECAUSE THEY HAVE LUCK ON A LEASH.

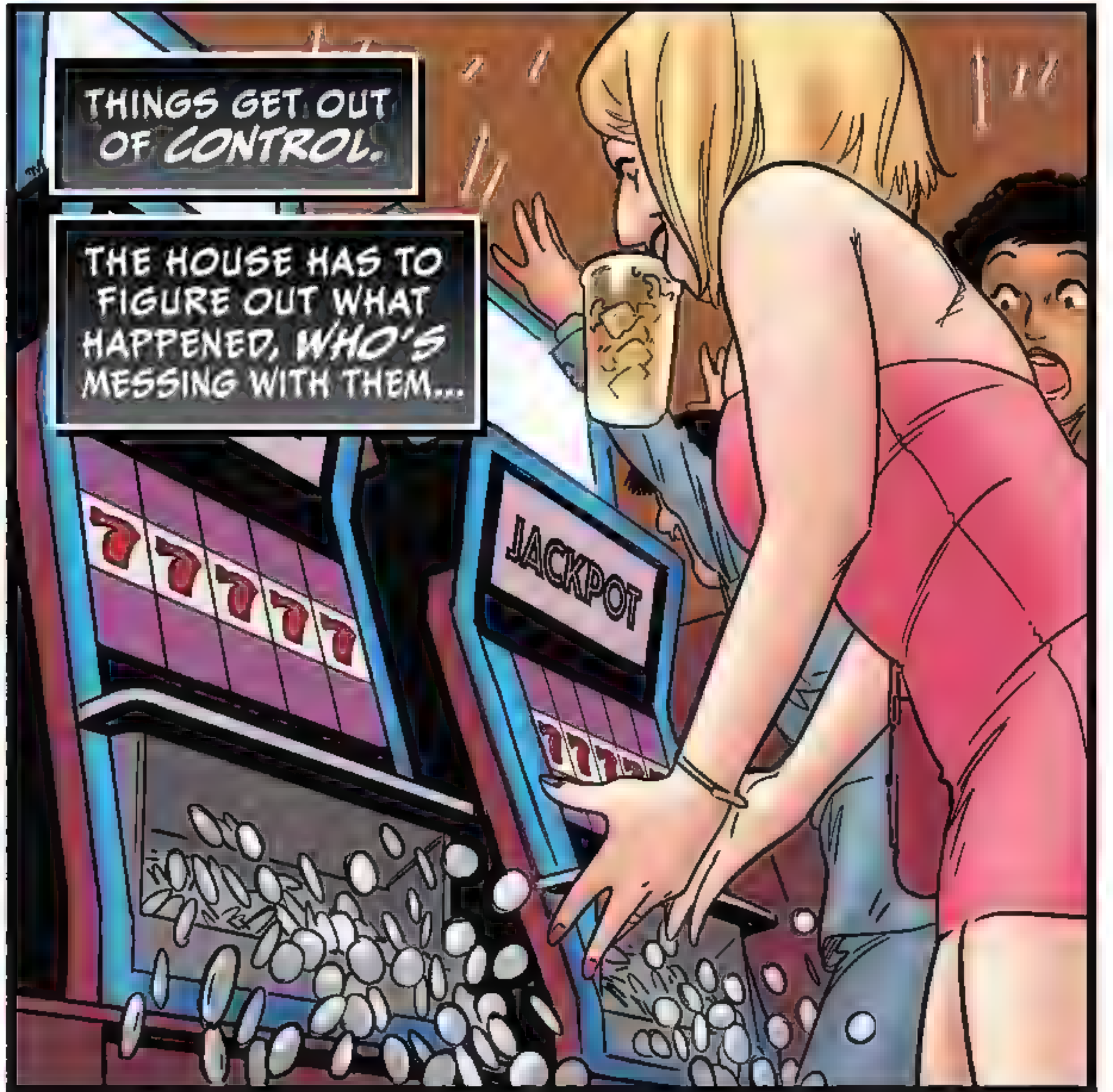
CAGED WITH RISK ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS.

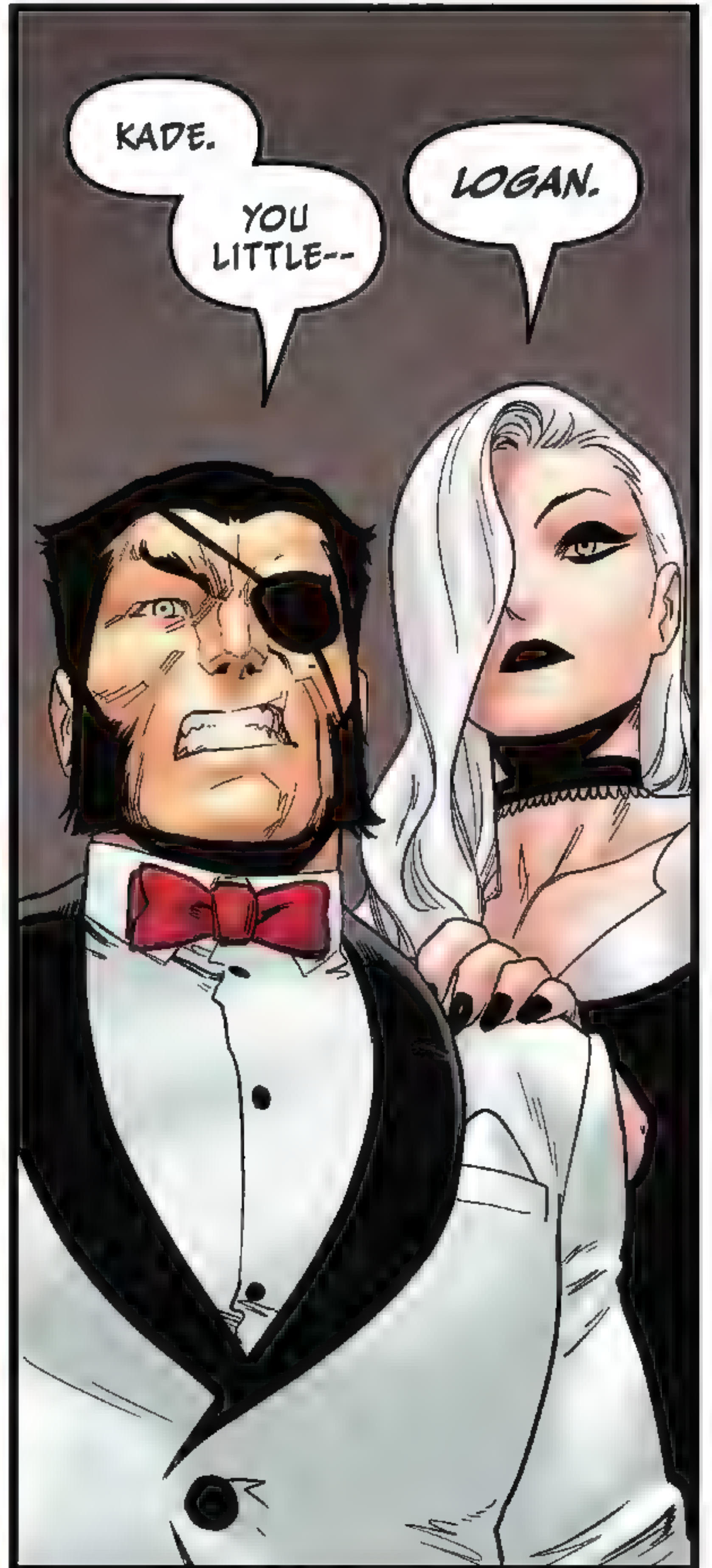
BUT GIVE THOSE ODDS A NUDGE, GIVE THOSE PROBABILITIES A PUSH, JUST A LITTLE PUSH...

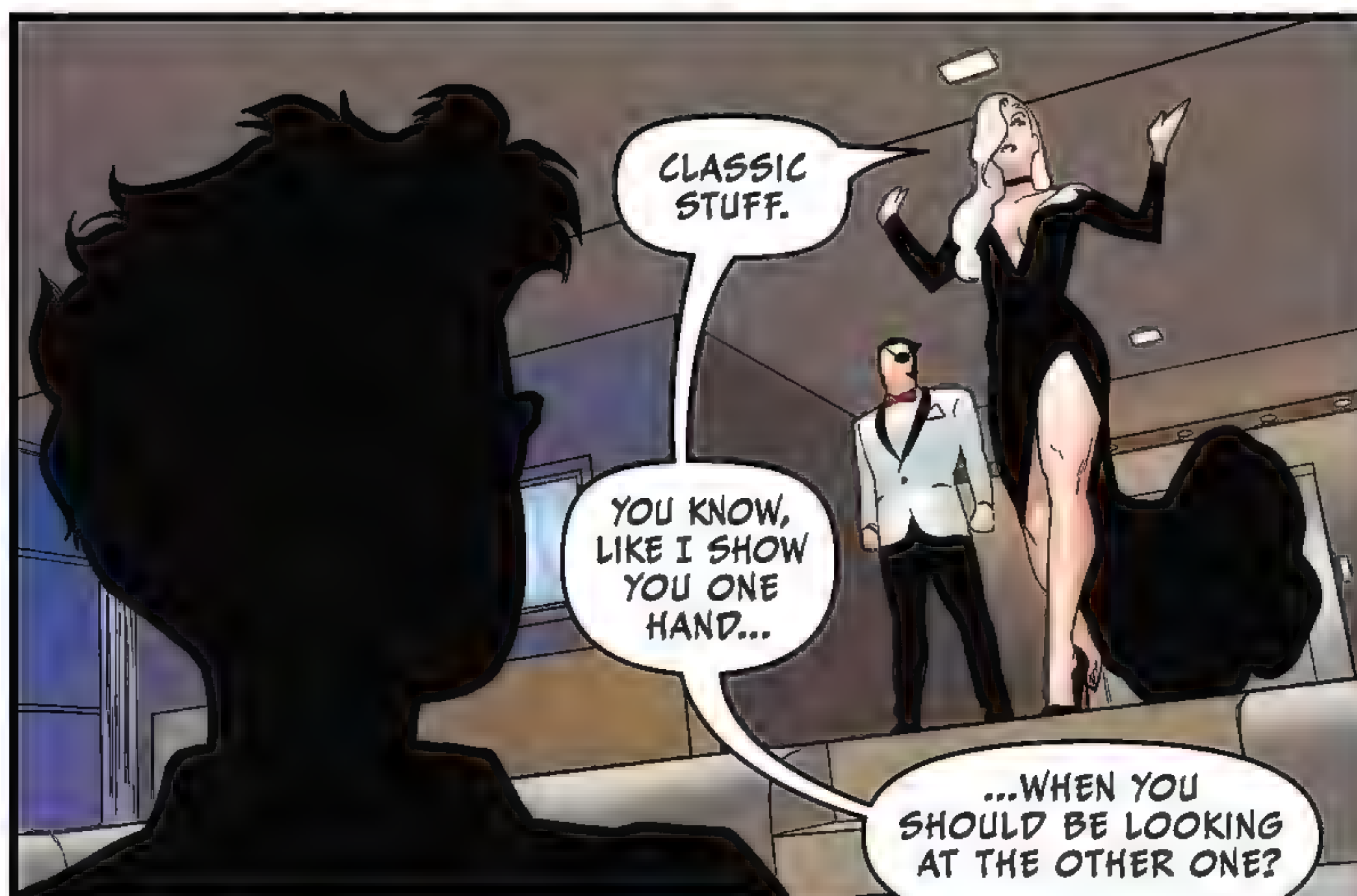
...LIKE WITH A BAD-LUCK POWER...

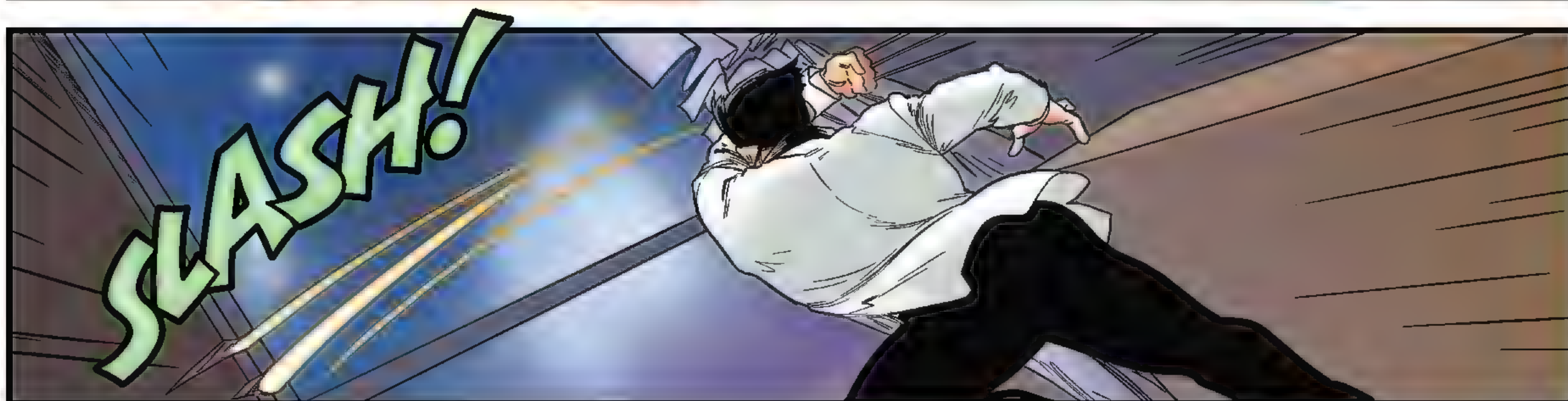
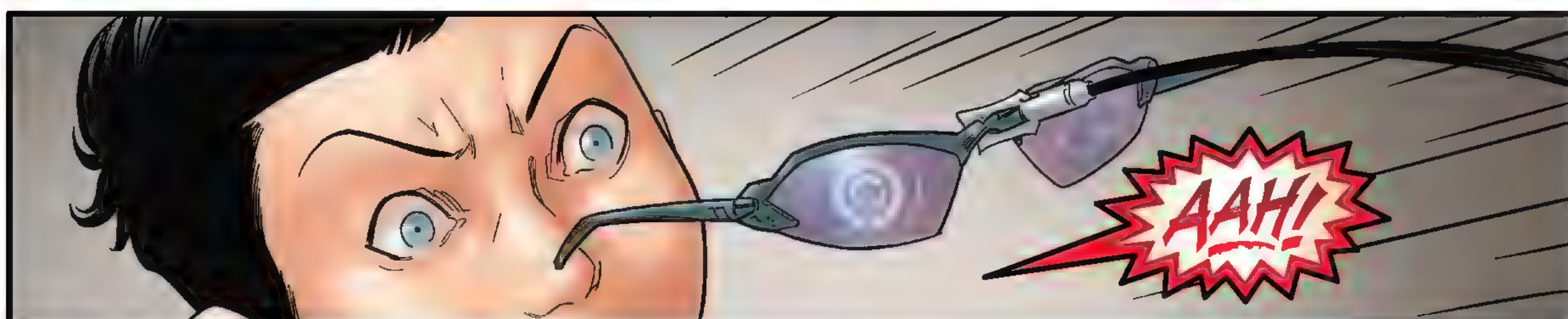
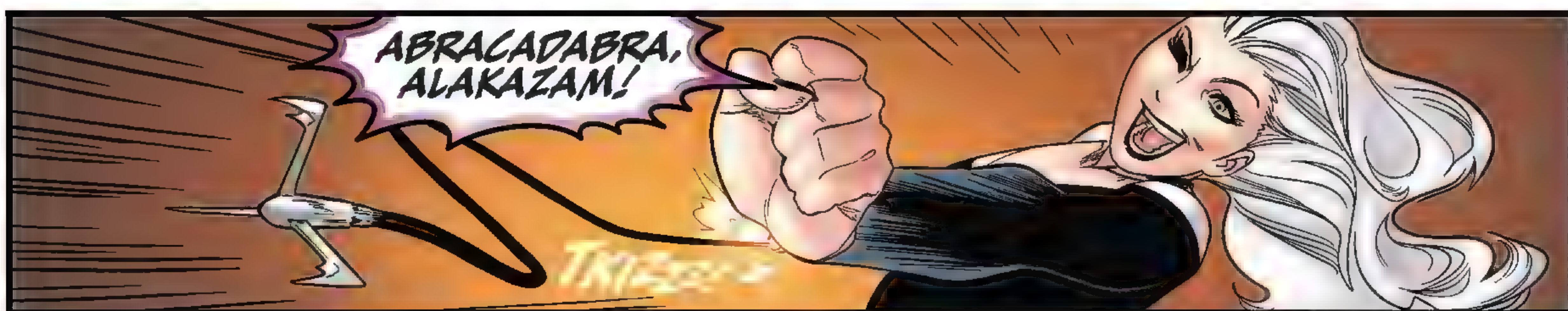
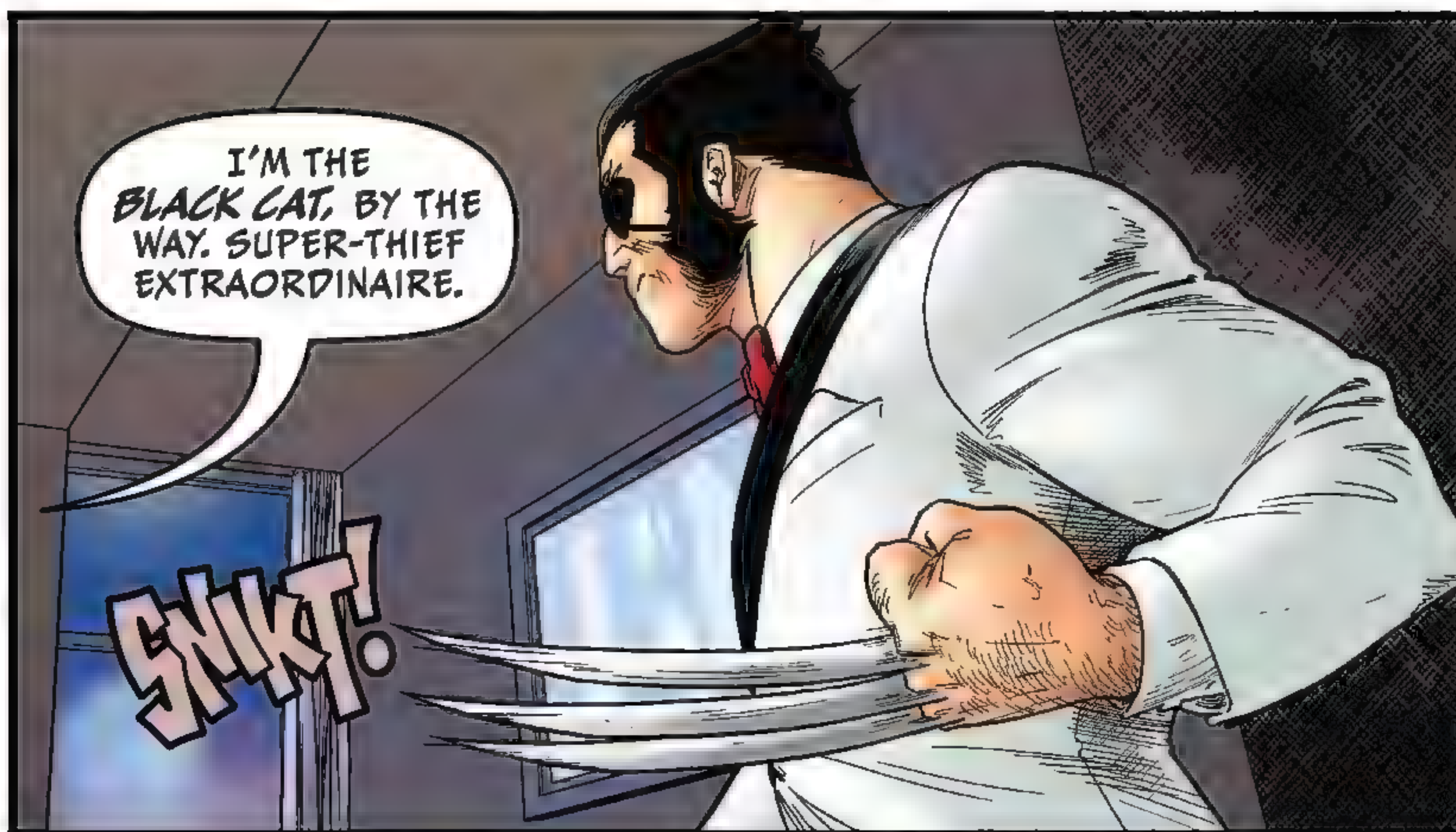
...AND THEY WOBBLE. LUCK IS OFF ITS LEASH. OUT OF ITS CAGE.

AND THOSE CALCULATIONS? OUT THE WINDOW.







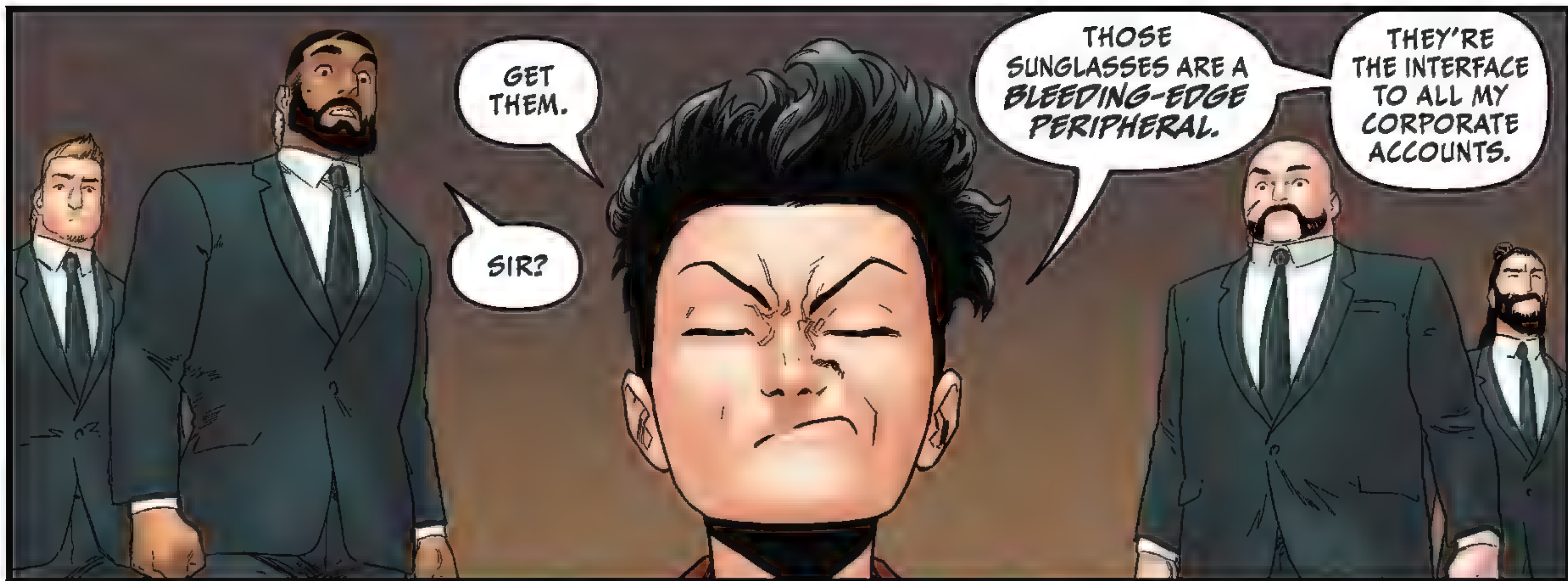




I DON'T
LIKE YOUR
PLANS!

NO ONE
DOES!

KIZZZ!

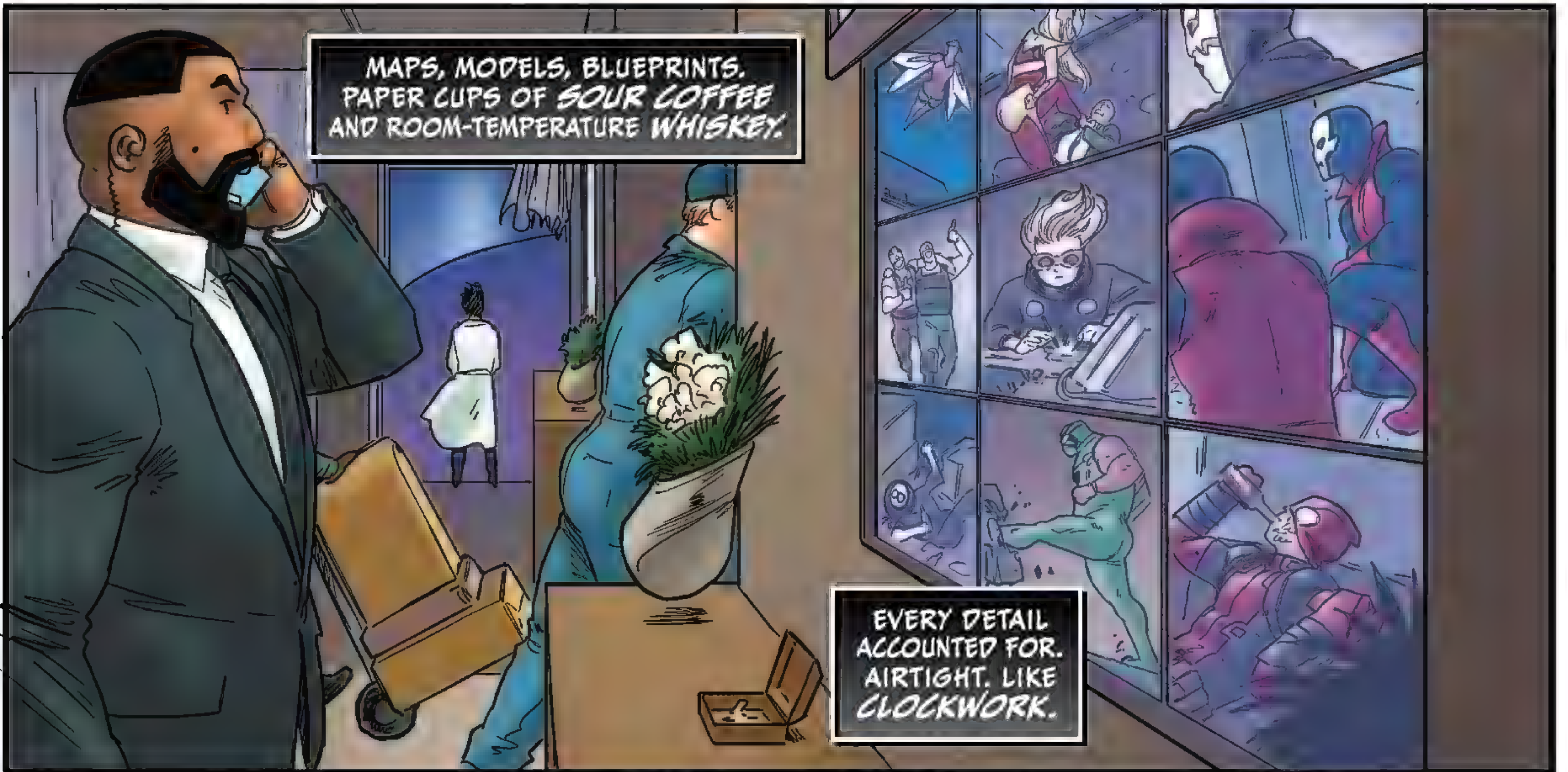
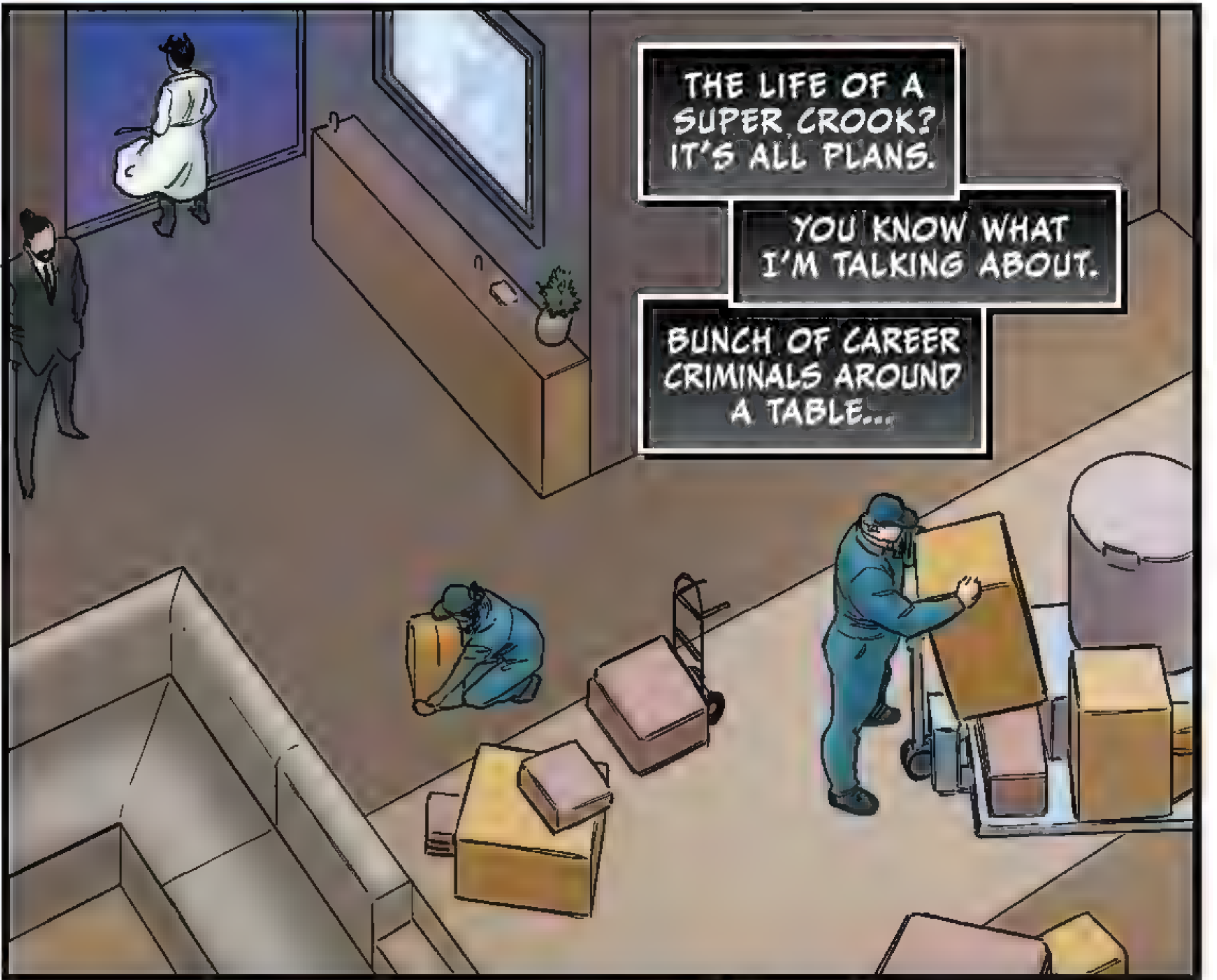




IT'S
"SNIKT."

SNICKET,
BUB!

THAT'S
WHAT I SAID.
IT'S YOUR SILLY
CANADIAN
ACCENT.



MADRIPOOR. NOW.

I'LL LET YOU GUESS
WHICH ONE OF THOSE
I'M BEST AT.

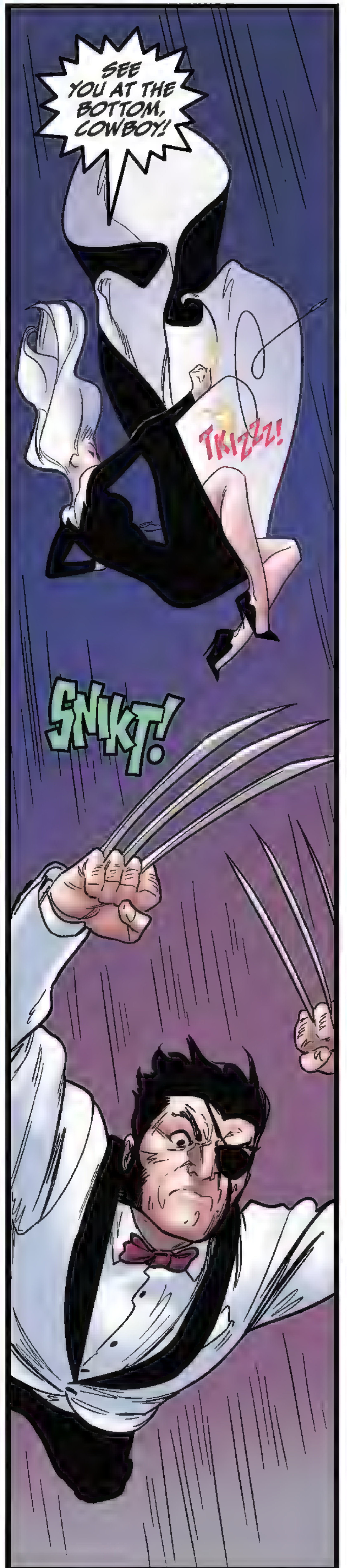


IT MEANS THAT SOME
THINGS HAVE TO BE LEFT
TO CHANCE, THAT ALL THE
VARIABLES HAVEN'T BEEN
FULLY SORTED OUT.

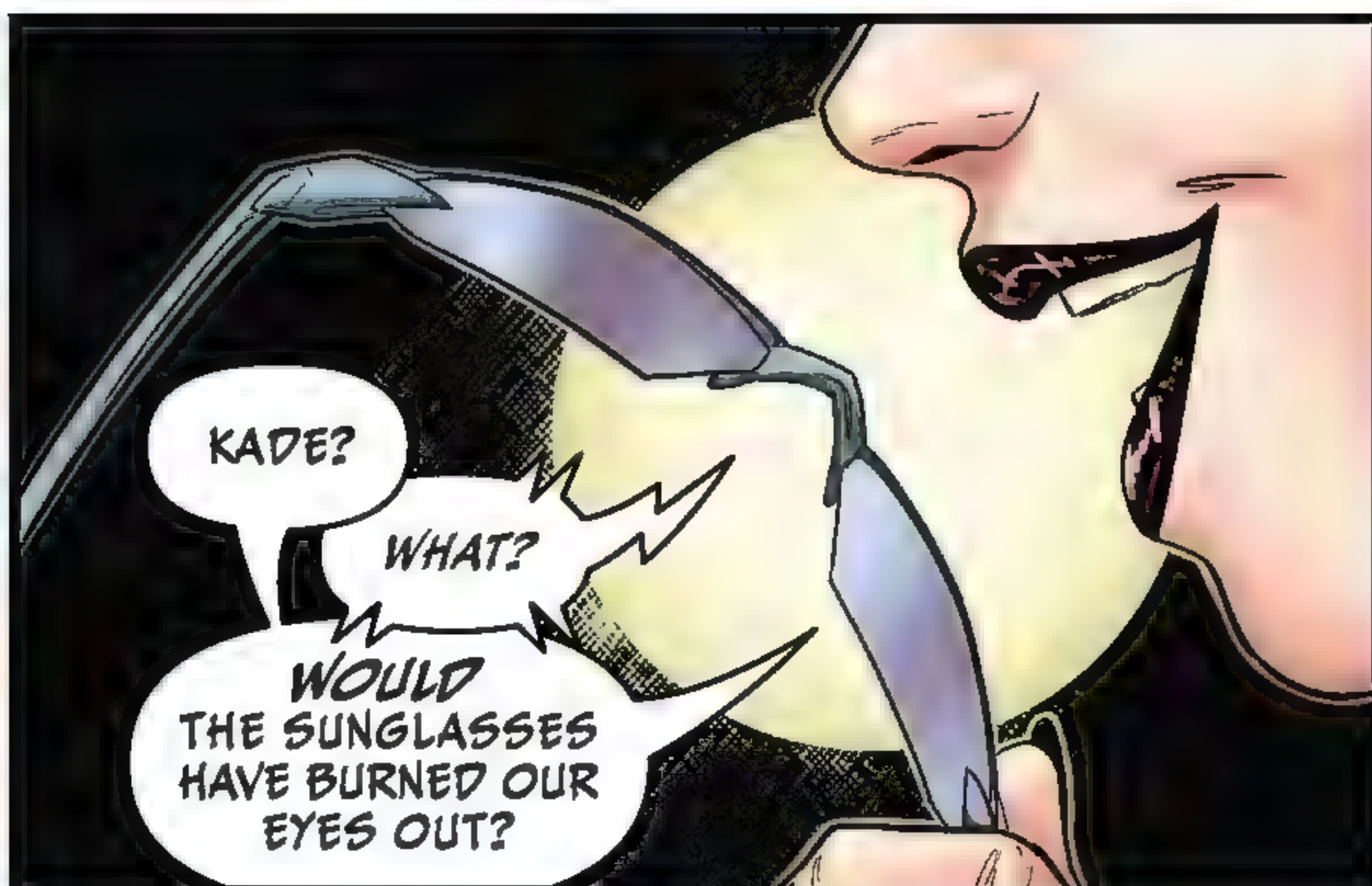
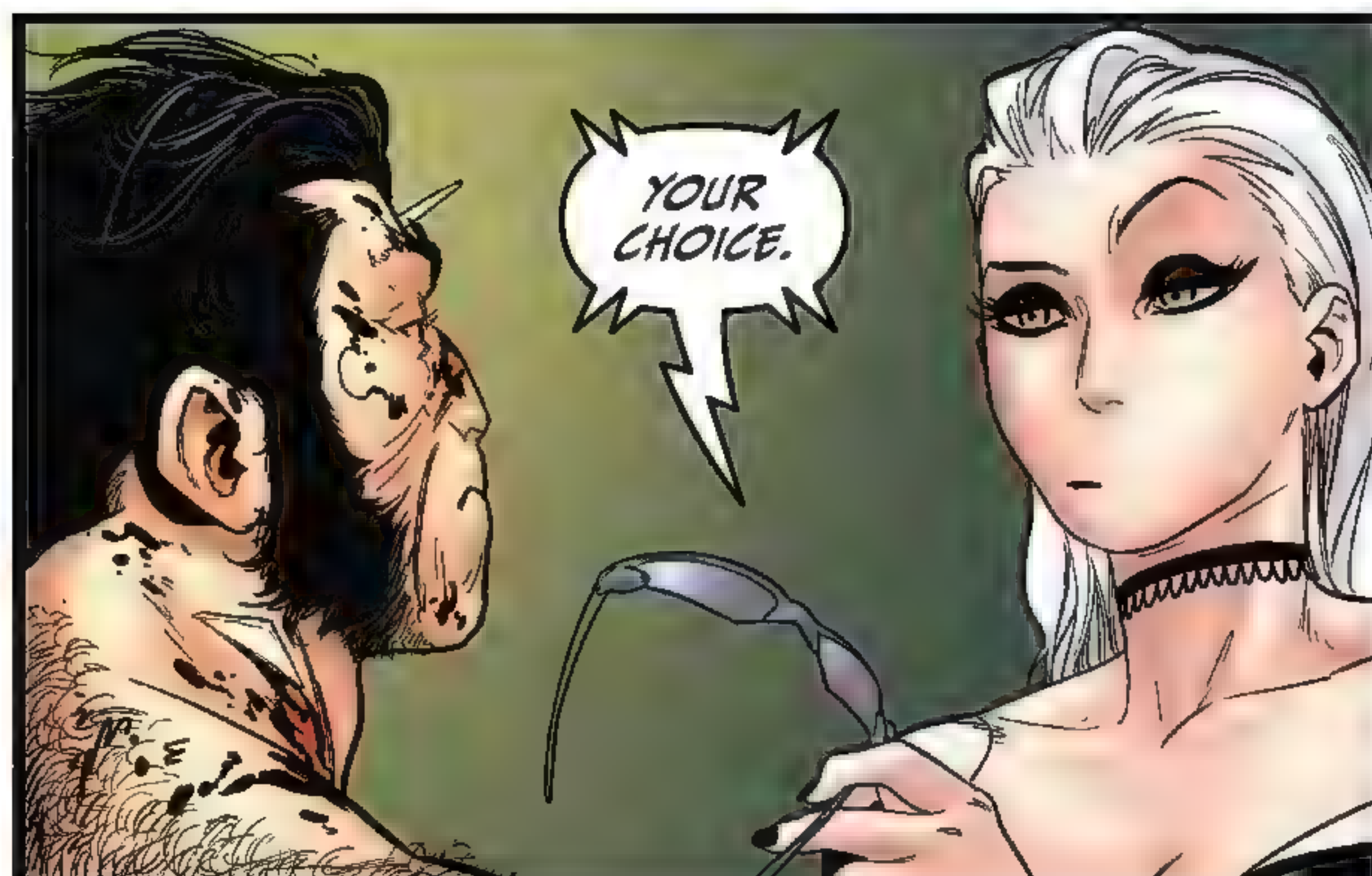
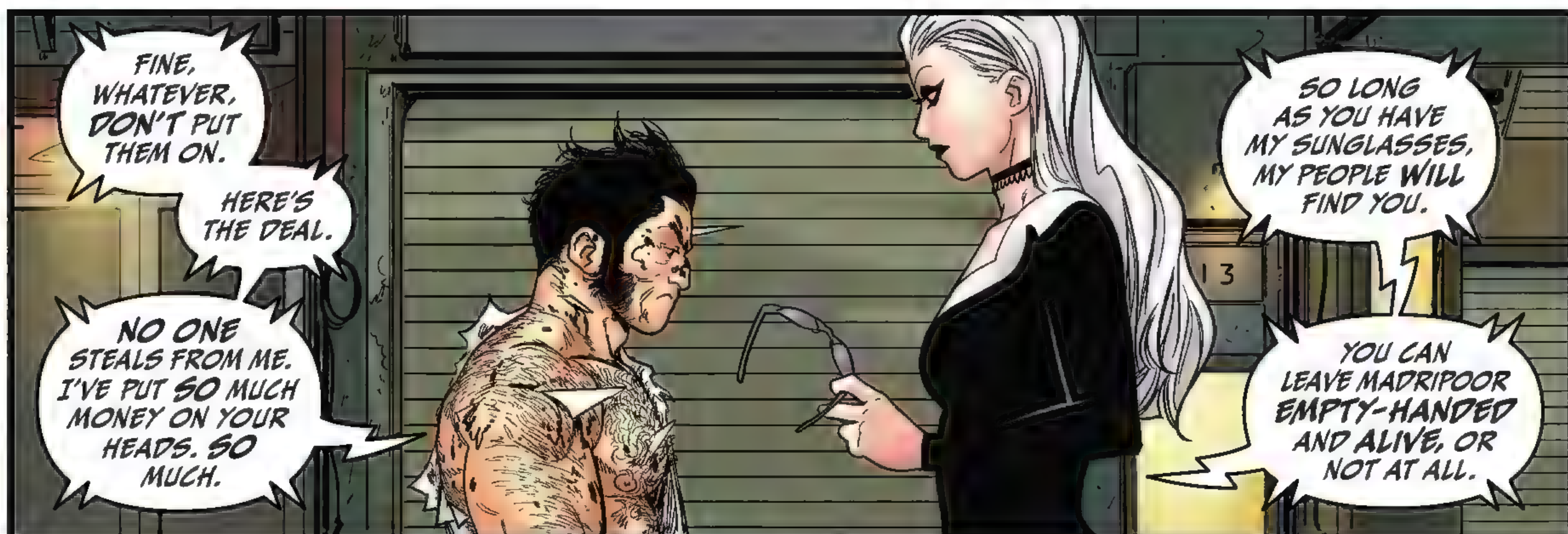
Reee-eee-eeeeee...

BUT USUALLY
IT WORKS
OUT FINE.

SNAP!
TWANGGG!







27 MINUTES LATER. LOWTOWN.

"...IT'S MAGIC."

HAHAHA!
FRANKENSTEINS!
NO WAY!



YOU GOT
TO GET OUT
MORE.

WHEN
YOU--

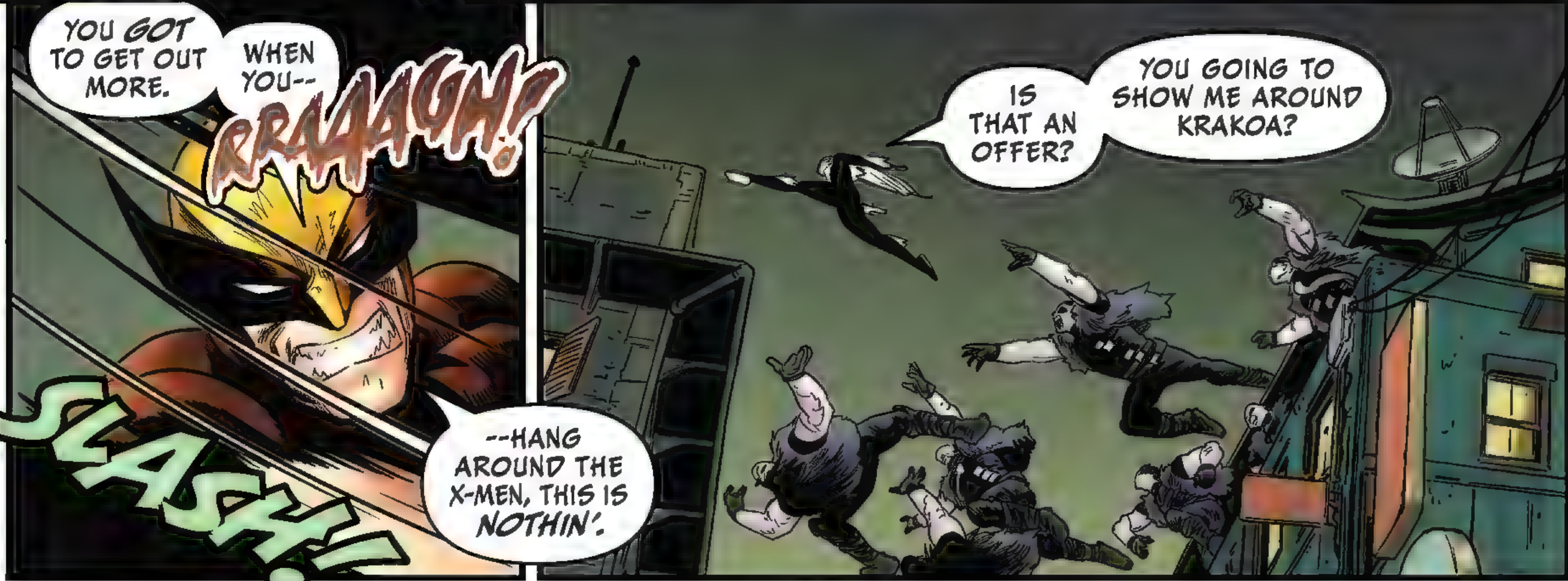
RRRAAGH!

SLASH!!

--HANG
AROUND THE
X-MEN, THIS IS
NOTHIN'.

IS
THAT AN
OFFER?

YOU GOING TO
SHOW ME AROUND
KRAKOA?



NO
OFFENSE,
DARLIN'...

...BUT
ABSOLUTELY
NOT.





HEY!
WOLVERINE!
YOU'RE GOOD,
RIGHT?! YOU
GOT THIS?!

PLACE
YOUR BETS!

HOW LONG
UNTIL HE KILLS
THEM ALL?!

RAAARUN!
SLASH!

GRAAAH!

HE'S FINE.

HE'S
WOLVERINE,
FOR GOODNESS'
SAKE.

I COULD LEAVE HIM
HERE. IT WOULDN'T
AFFECT MY PLANS
ONE WHISKER.

BUT THAT WOULD
BE KIND OF CHEAP,
EVEN FOR ME.

AND REALLY,
DO I WANT
WOLVERINE--

--THE GUY WITH THE
SUPER-POWERS OF "KNIFE
HANDS" AND "BAD ATTITUDE"--

--THE SAME POWER
SET AS, WELL,
FREDDY KRUEGER--

--MAD AT ME?

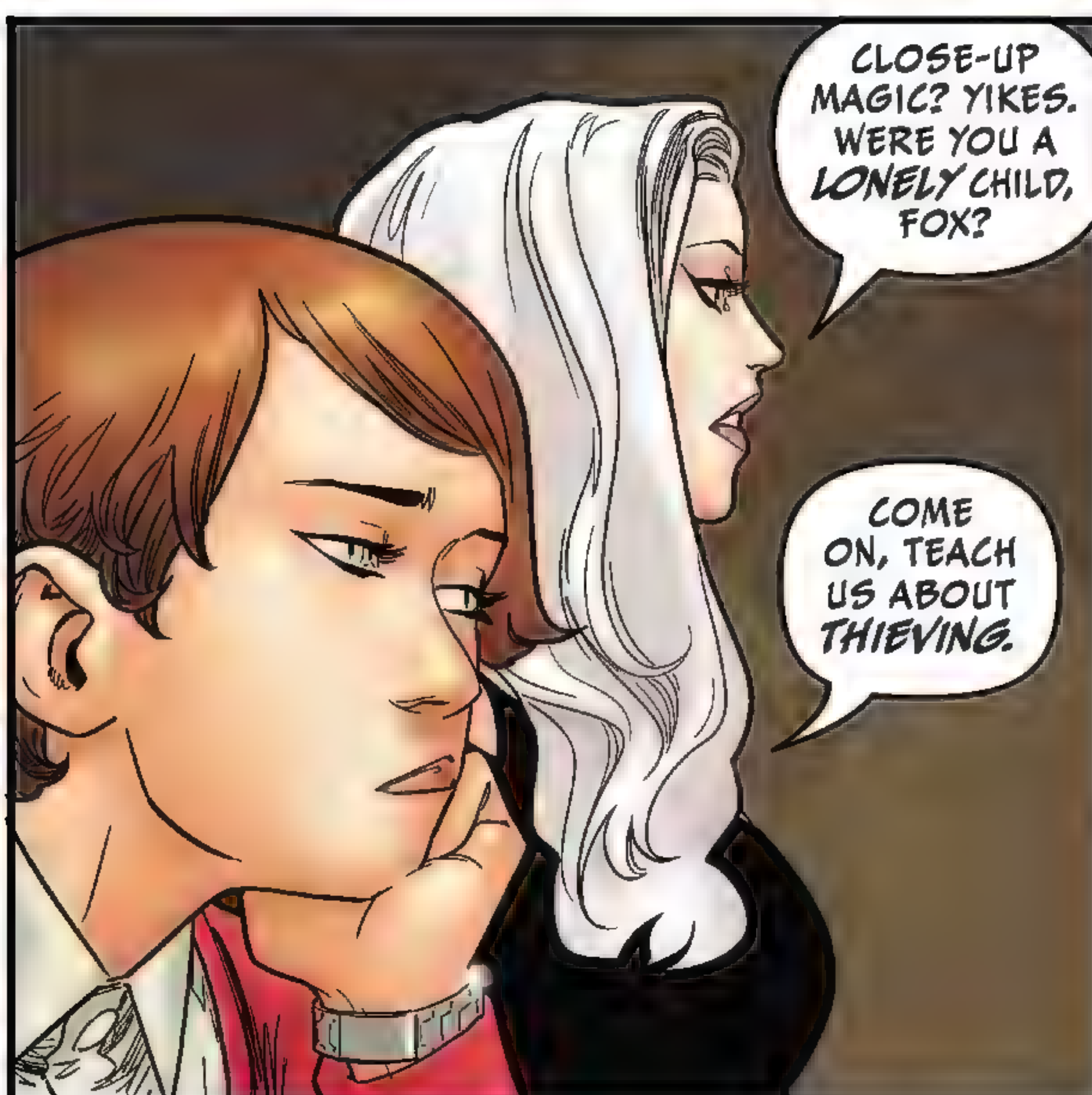
NAH.

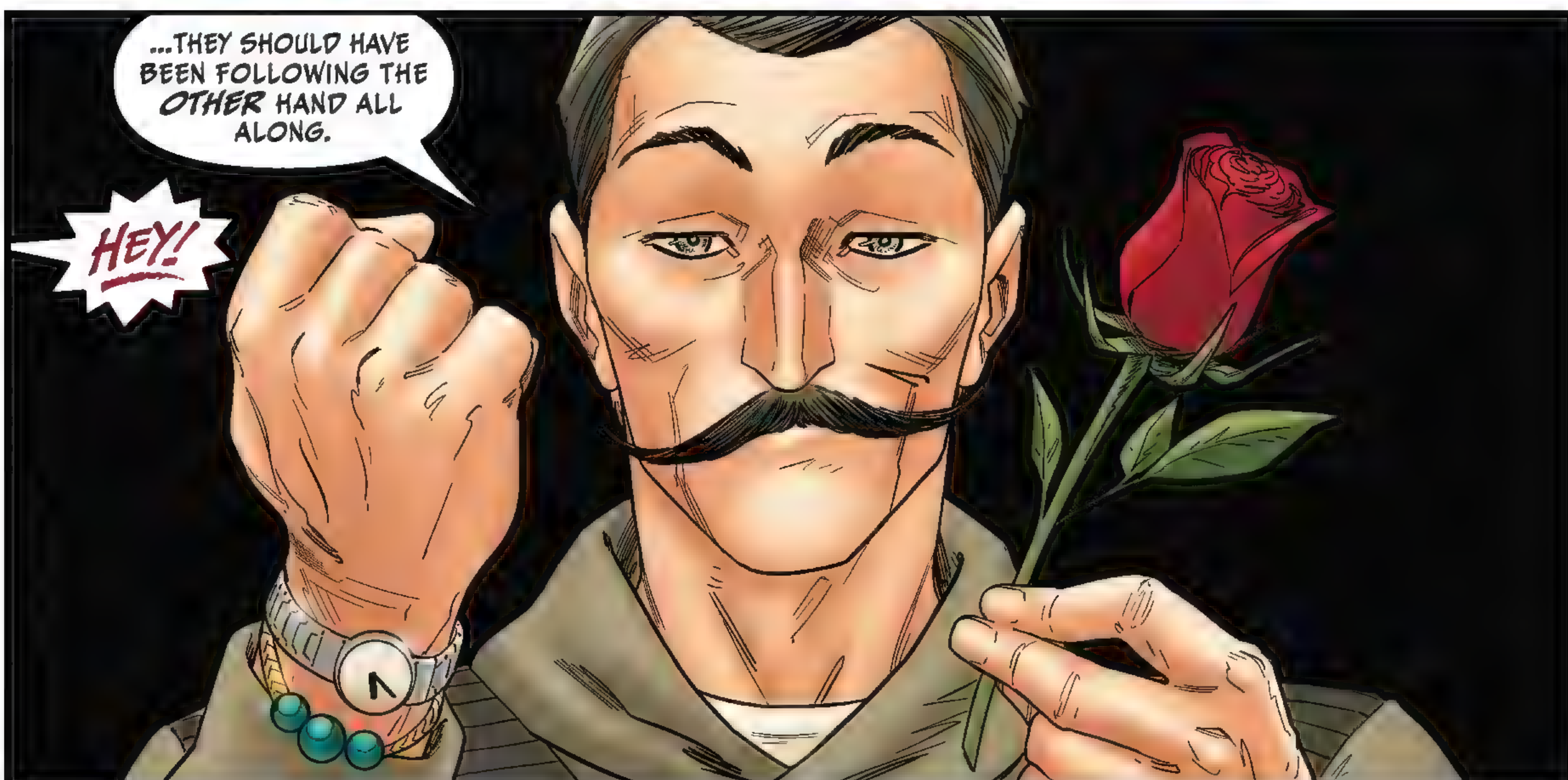
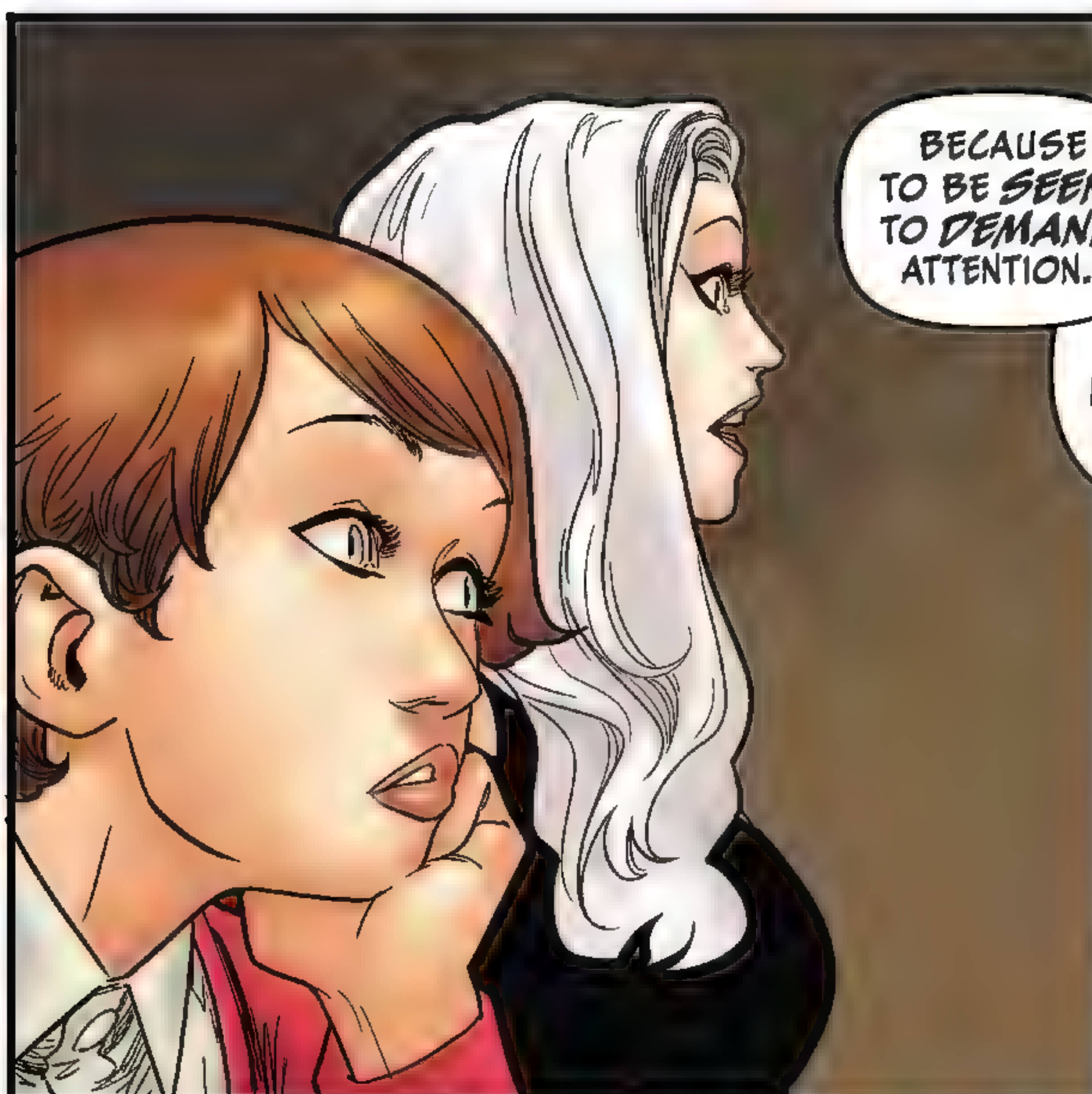
ANOTHER--
ANOTHER NEW
CHALLENGER?!

THAT'S
RIGHT...

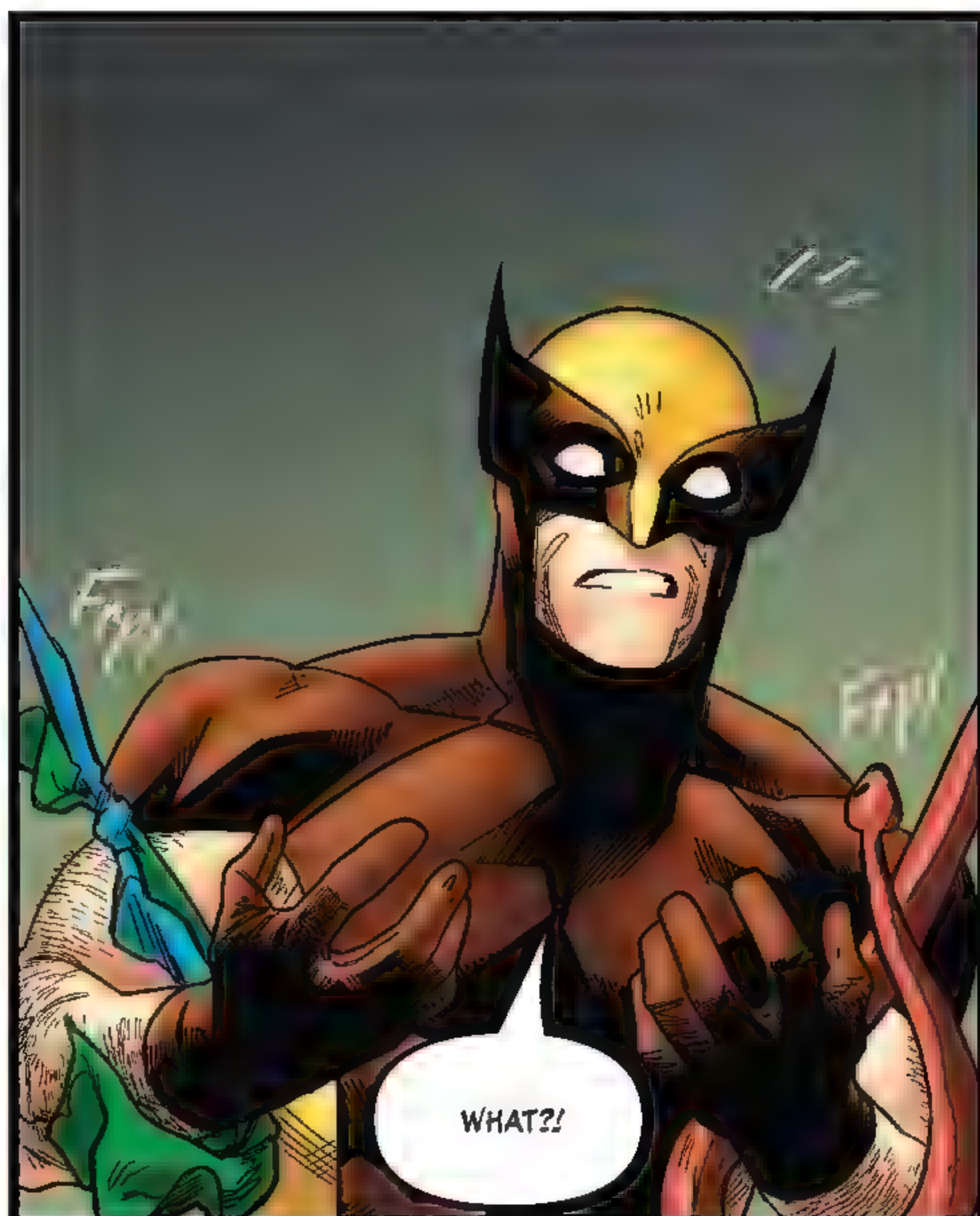
IT'S THE
BLACK CAT,
BABY!

"MAGIC,
DARLINGS."













GOTCHA!

LOGAN!
HEY! HI!

IT'S ME!
DEADPOOL!

W-WADE?



WHAT ARE YOU
DOING HERE? DON'T
YOU GOT A MONSTER
ISLAND TO RUN?

YEP! ANYWAYS,
YOU OKAY, PAL?
THOSE NAUGHTY
BROTHERS GRIMM
DIDN'T ROUGH
YOU UP TOO
MUCH?

I'M
FINE,
WHAT--



GOOD!

BANG! BANG!
BANG!

UGGHH!



LISTEN,
NOTHING
PERSONAL,
BUD.

BUT
YOU'RE
WORTH
A LOT OF
MONEY
RIGHT
NOW.

AND WE BOTH
KNOW THAT WHATEVER
KILGORE'S GOT PLANNED
FOR YOU, YOU'LL GET OUT
OF IT EVENTUALLY.

SO WE'LL APPLY
A LITTLE .45 CALIBER
BRAIN SCRAMBLE--

UnNGHHh!



Ahh
NUTS.

Heh.



BAD LUCK, LOSER!

AAARGH!

THUK!

MY SPLEEN!

NO, WAIT--

MY APPENDIX!

(I STILL HAD AN APPENDIX???)



YOU GOOD?

I'M--

URGHHH!

--GOOD.



HERE, PLANT THESE ON OUR GROSS FIGUREHEAD.

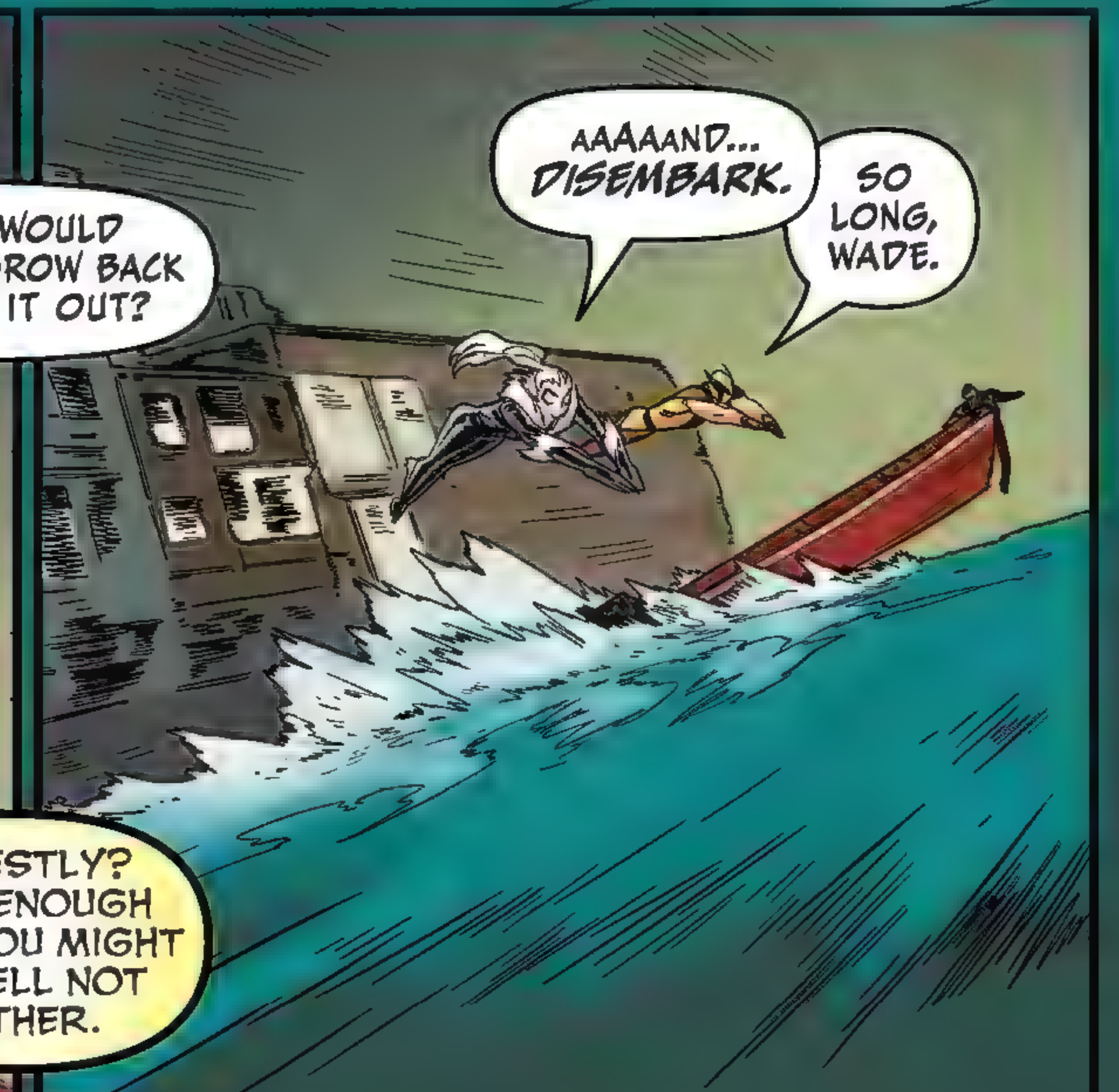


YOU'RE GOING TO DO ME LIKE THIS, LOGAN?

WHAT ABOUT CANADA? WHAT ABOUT WEAPON X? WE'RE PRACTICALLY RELATED!

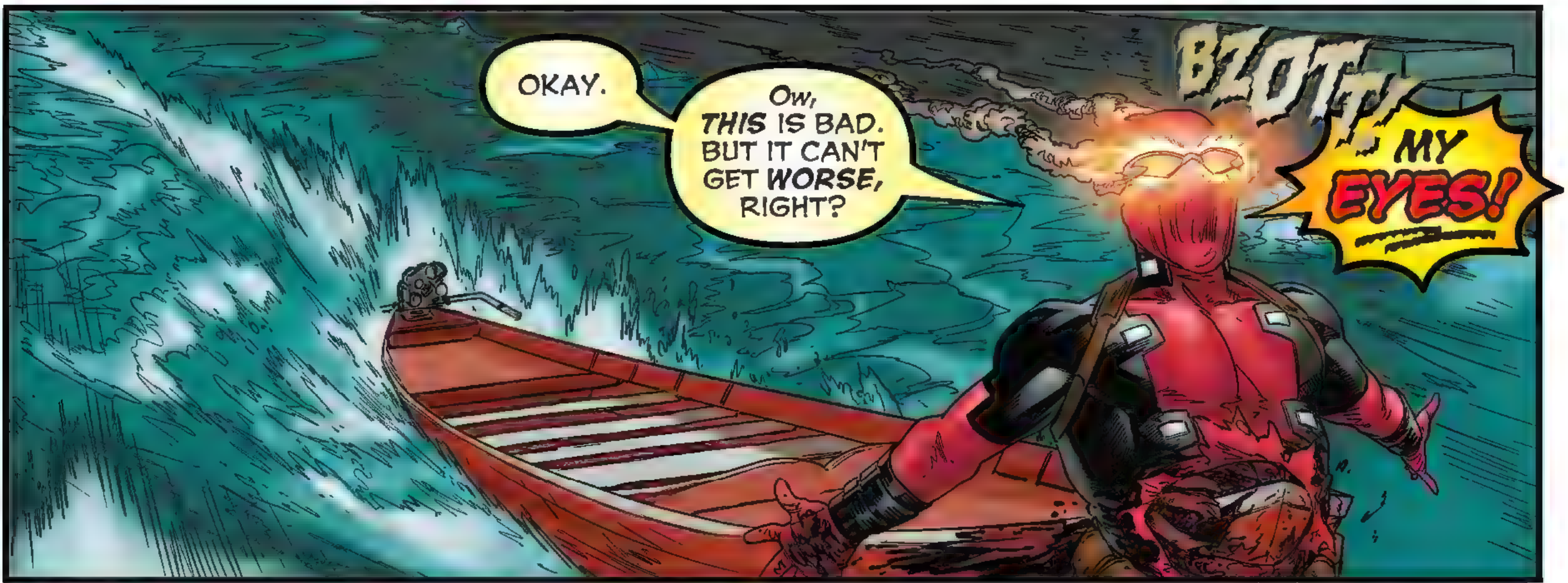
HOW FAST WOULD YOUR TONGUE GROW BACK IF I CARVED IT OUT?

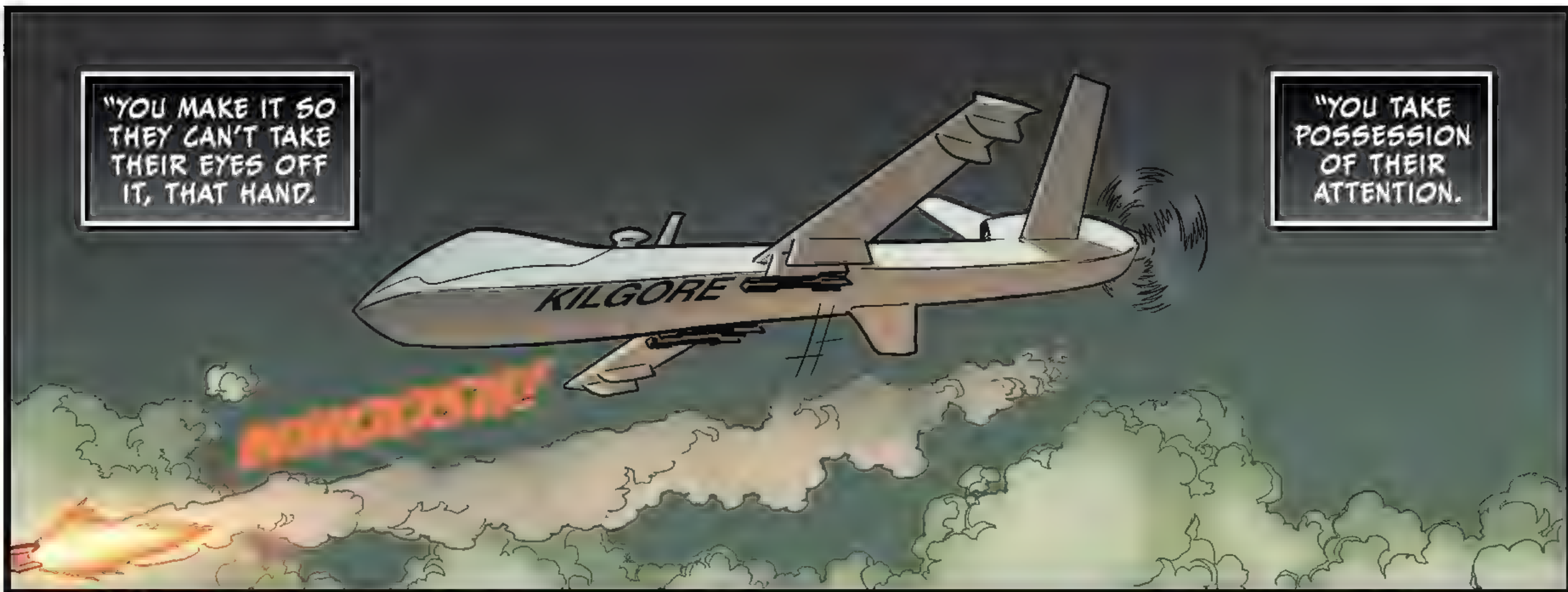
HONESTLY? FAST ENOUGH THAT YOU MIGHT AS WELL NOT BOTHER.



AAAAAND... DISEMBARK.

SO LONG, WADE.





"YOU MAKE IT SO
THEY CAN'T TAKE
THEIR EYES OFF
IT, THAT HAND."

"YOU TAKE
POSSESSION
OF THEIR
ATTENTION."



"YOU STEAL IT."



Ow.

Ow.

Ow.

OKAY, NOW
IT CAN'T GET
ANY WORSE,
RIGHT?

...RIGHT?

"BECAUSE WHILE
THEY'RE WATCHING
THAT HAND..."



...THEY'RE
NOT WATCHING
THE OTHER
HAND.

BOYS.

BOSS.



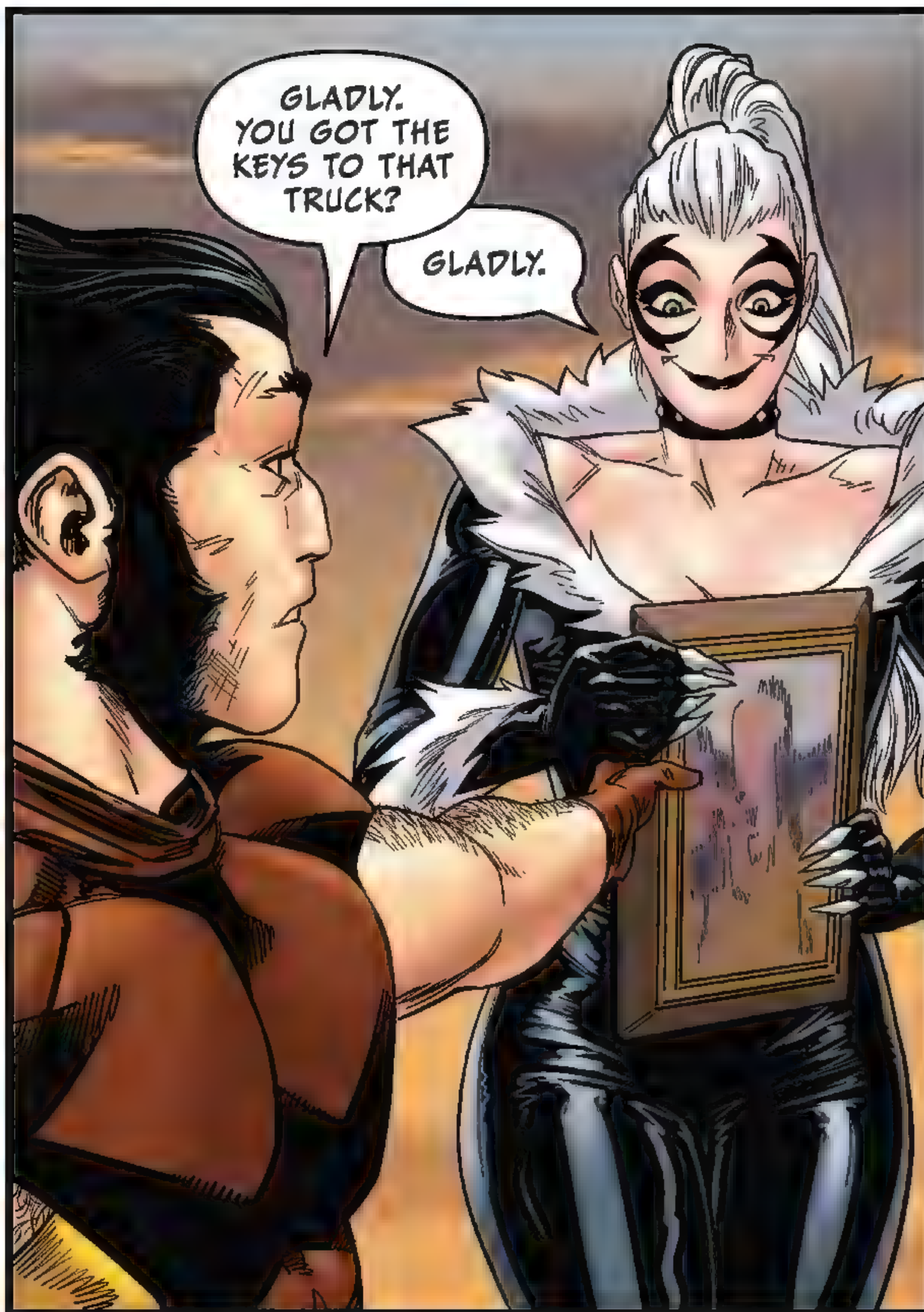
"AND THAT'S THE HAND
THAT MATTERS."



WELL,
I'LL BE...

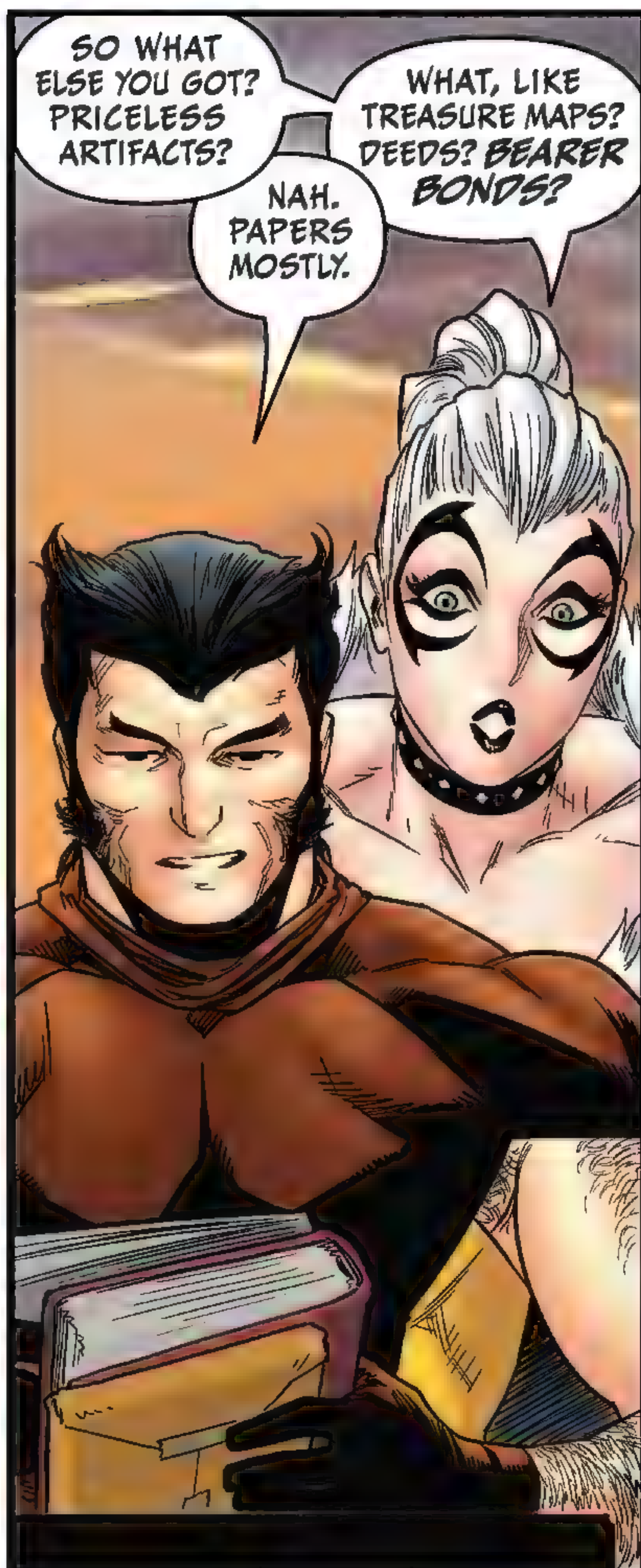
AS
PROMISED--
YOUR OLD
STUFF.

NOW: HOW
ABOUT THAT
PAINTING?



GLADLY.
YOU GOT THE
KEYS TO THAT
TRUCK?

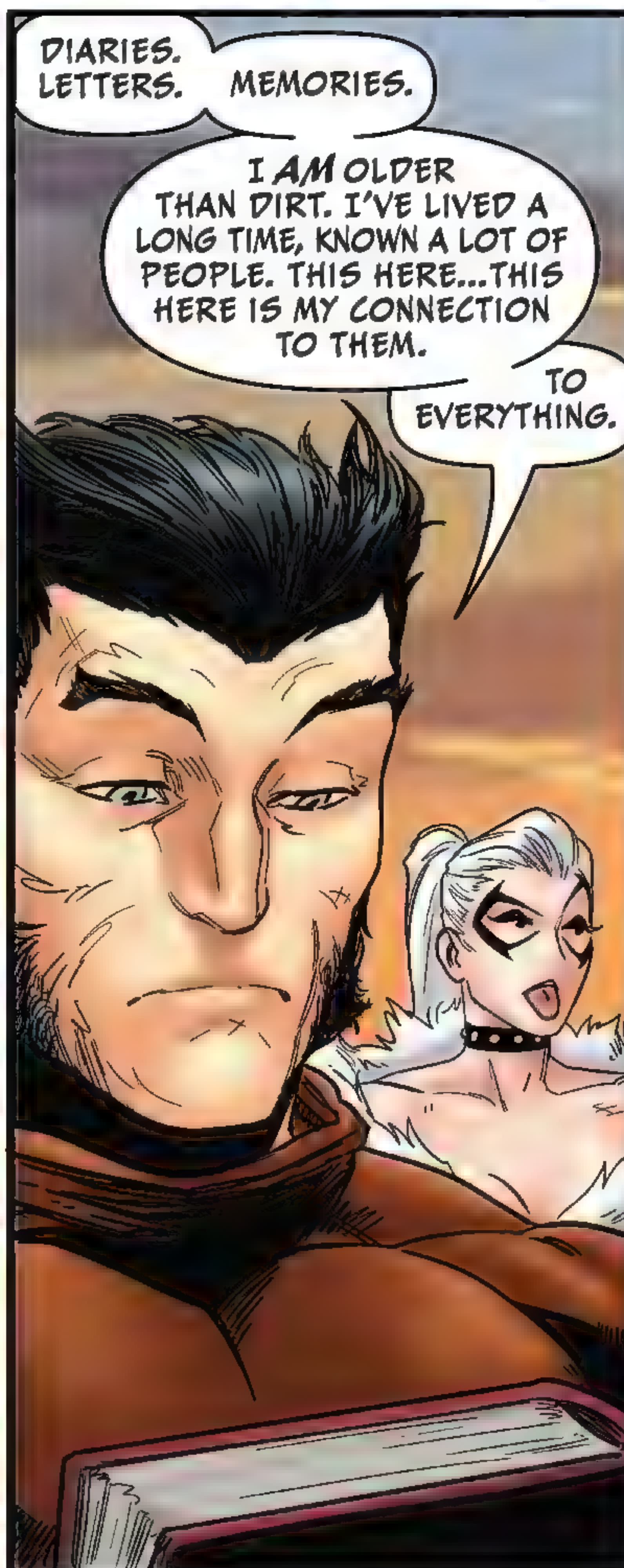
GLADLY.



SO WHAT
ELSE YOU GOT?
PRICELESS
ARTIFACTS?

NAH.
PAPERS
MOSTLY.

WHAT, LIKE
TREASURE MAPS?
DEEDS? BEARER
BONDS?



DIARIES.
LETTERS. MEMORIES.

I AM OLDER
THAN DIRT. I'VE LIVED A
LONG TIME, KNOWN A LOT OF
PEOPLE. THIS HERE...THIS
HERE IS MY CONNECTION
TO THEM.

TO
EVERYTHING.



SO NOTHING
OF ANY REAL
MONETARY
VALUE. GOT IT.

NO, THIS IS
JUST VALUABLE
TO ME.

'CEPT FOR THAT
PAINTING, MAYBE.
YOU'RE WELCOME,
BY THE WAY.



WE'RE BUILDING A FUTURE ON KRAKOA.

BUT I STILL NEED TO REMEMBER MY PAST.

WHERE I CAME FROM, WHAT I'VE DONE. GOOD AND BAD.



THE FUTURE'S COMIN', PRETTY CAT.



FUTURE'S ALWAYS COMIN'.

MAYBE I'LL SEE YOU THERE.



Huh.

WELL, BOYS, NEVER SAY I DON'T TAKE YOU TO EXOTIC LOCATIONS TO MEET EXCITING PEOPLE.

HORRIBLY DANGEROUS LOCATIONS.

REAL SCARY PEOPLE.

PIFFLE.



WE'RE WHEELS-UP IN TWENTY.

BECAUSE OUR FUTURE?

IT'S ALL CRIME, ALL THE TIME, BABY!



PARAMUS, NEW JERSEY.

"SO IT'S COME
TO THIS."

NEW
JERSEY.

HIDING
OUT IN NEW
JERSEY.

SNOB.

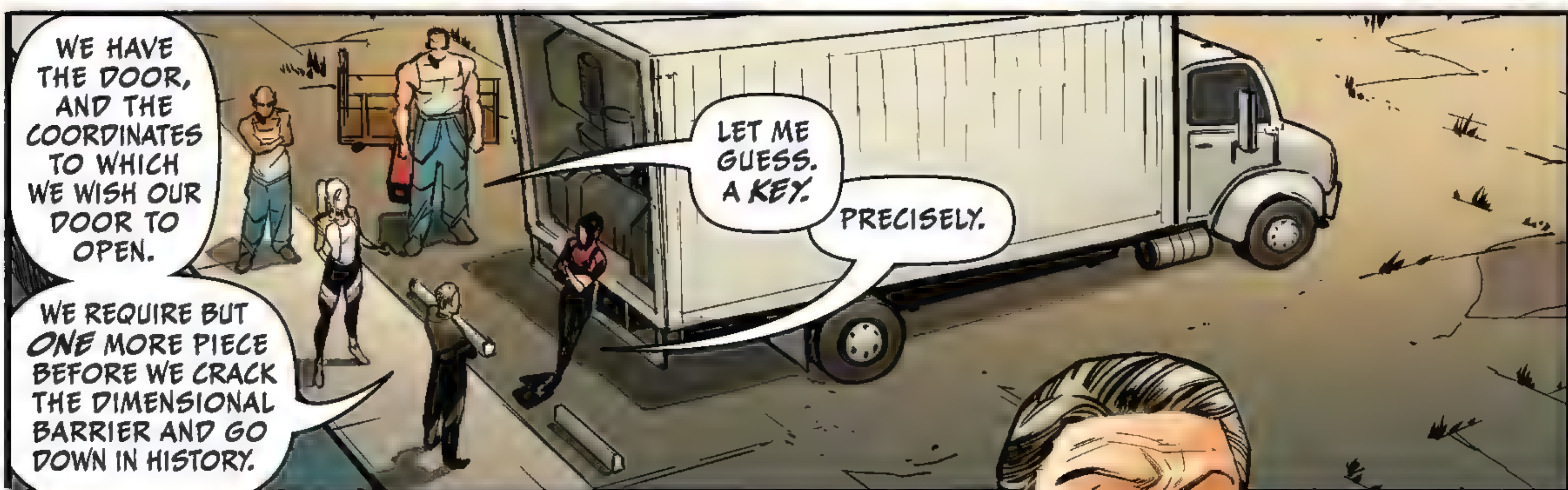
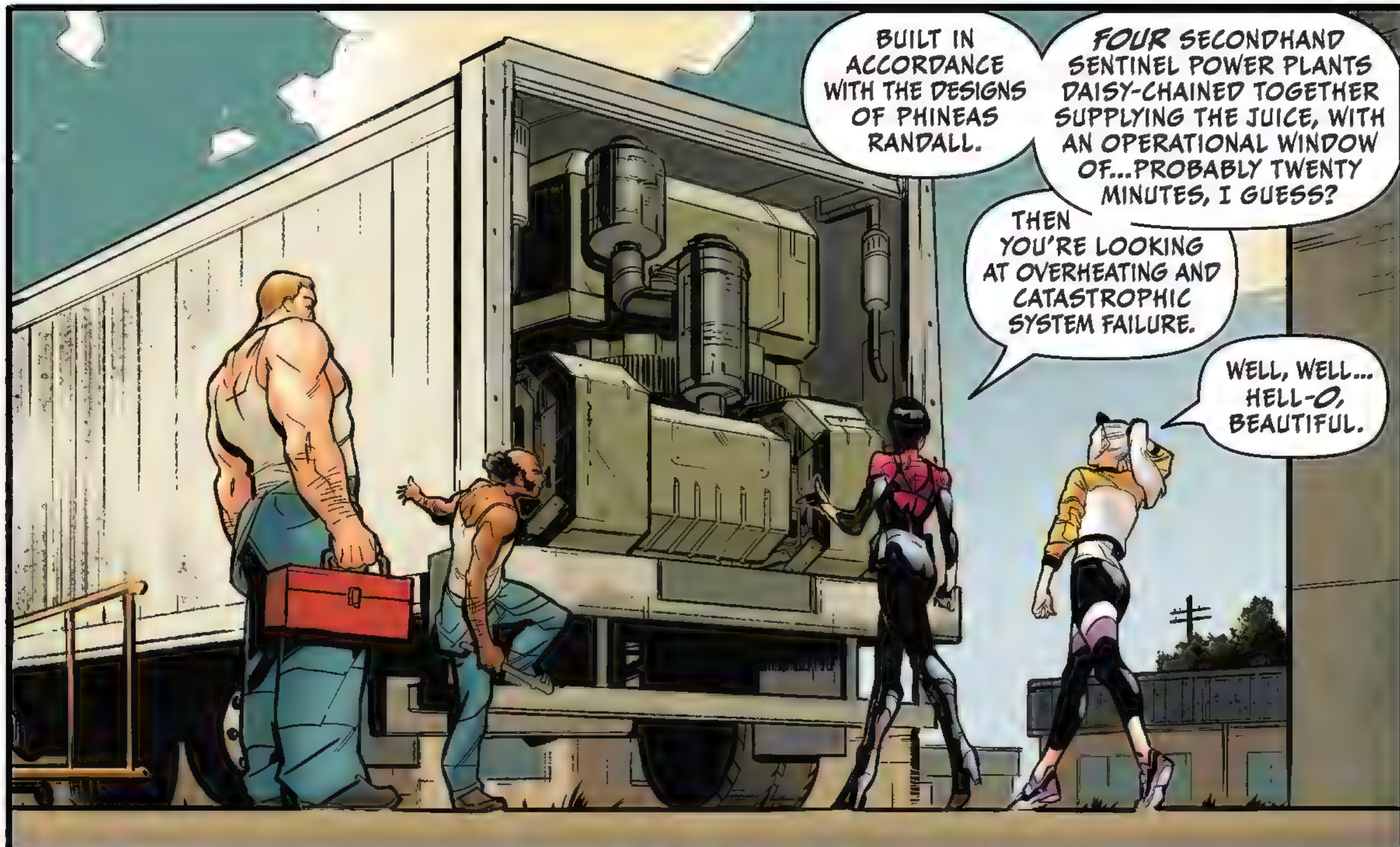
I GOT ANOTHER
PLACE, OUT IN
RED HOOK. FOR
THE PRESTIGE,
YOU KNOW?

BARELY WORTH
IT. LIKE MY OLD
MOTHER ALWAYS
USED TO SAY:
YOU WANT TO DO
WORK...

...YOU GO TO
NEW JERSEY.

YOU
WANTED
A RANDALL
GATE? I
BUILT YOU
A RANDALL
GATE.

ON WHEELS,
NO LESS. TRY
GETTING THAT IN
BROOKLYN.



TWO DAYS
LATER

"...NO ONE
SERIOUS."

ELODIE
GROS?

STARK
UNLIMITED

Hmm?

MR. STARK
WILL SEE YOU
NOW.

RED HAIR.

YOU GOT TO BE
KIDDING ME.

BUT OUR
RESEARCH
HAS STARK
ROMANTICALLY
LINKED WITH
TWO DIFFERENT
REDHEADS.

SO I GO RED.

HUMILIATING.

WHAT IS IT
WITH THESE
GUYS AND
REDHEADS?



TWO DAYS EARLIER.

SO WHAT'S OUR IN?

THIS IS **STARK** SECURITY. THE CAT BURGLAR GAG IS NOT AN OPTION HERE.



EVERY MAN HAS WEAKNESSES. WHAT ARE STARK'S?

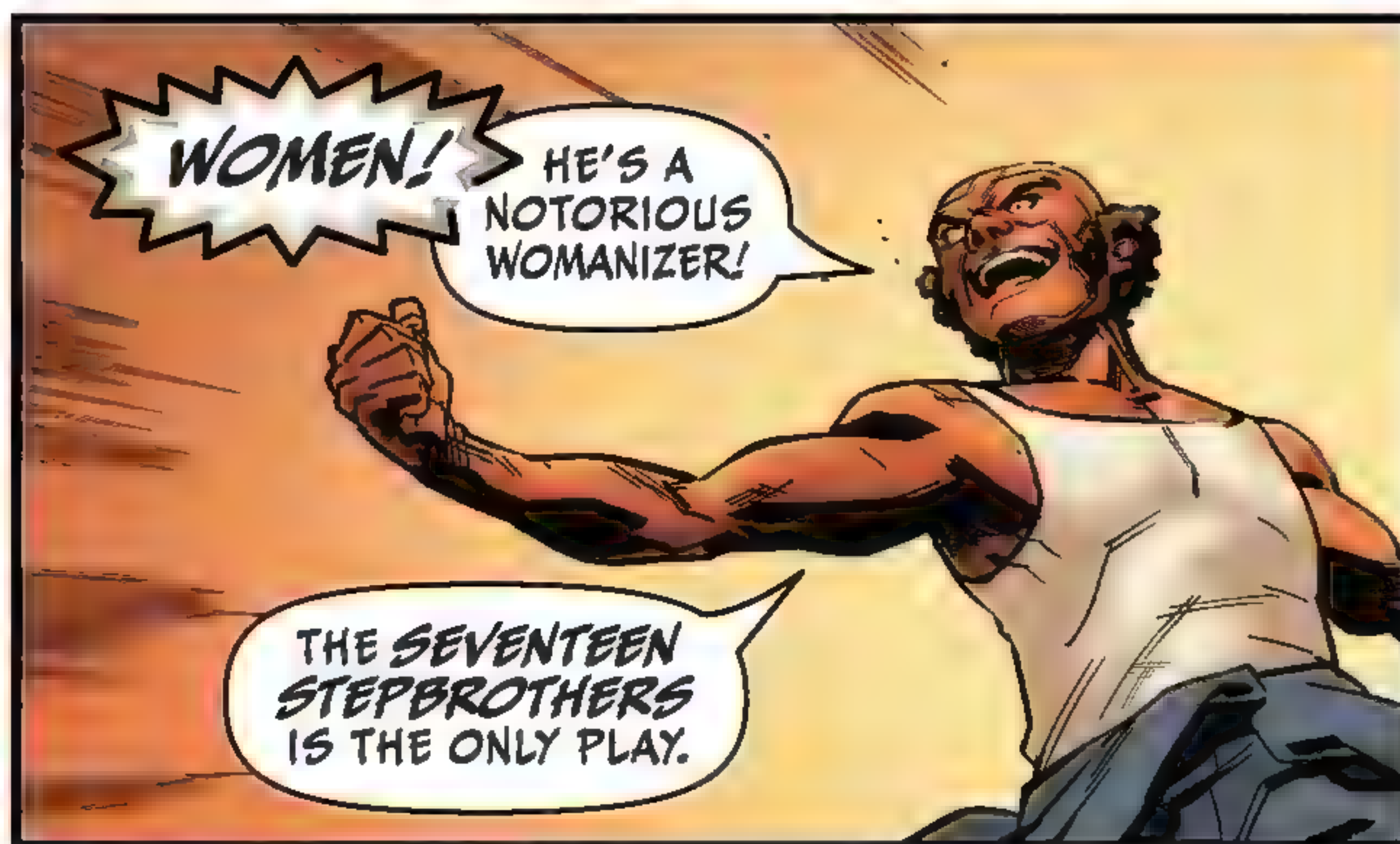
HE'S A DRUNK, SO...THE **WAGERING VICAR**?

THUMP!



ISN'T HE FAMOUSLY OFF THE SAUCE? I SAW IT IN THAT HENRY HELLRUNG MOVIE.

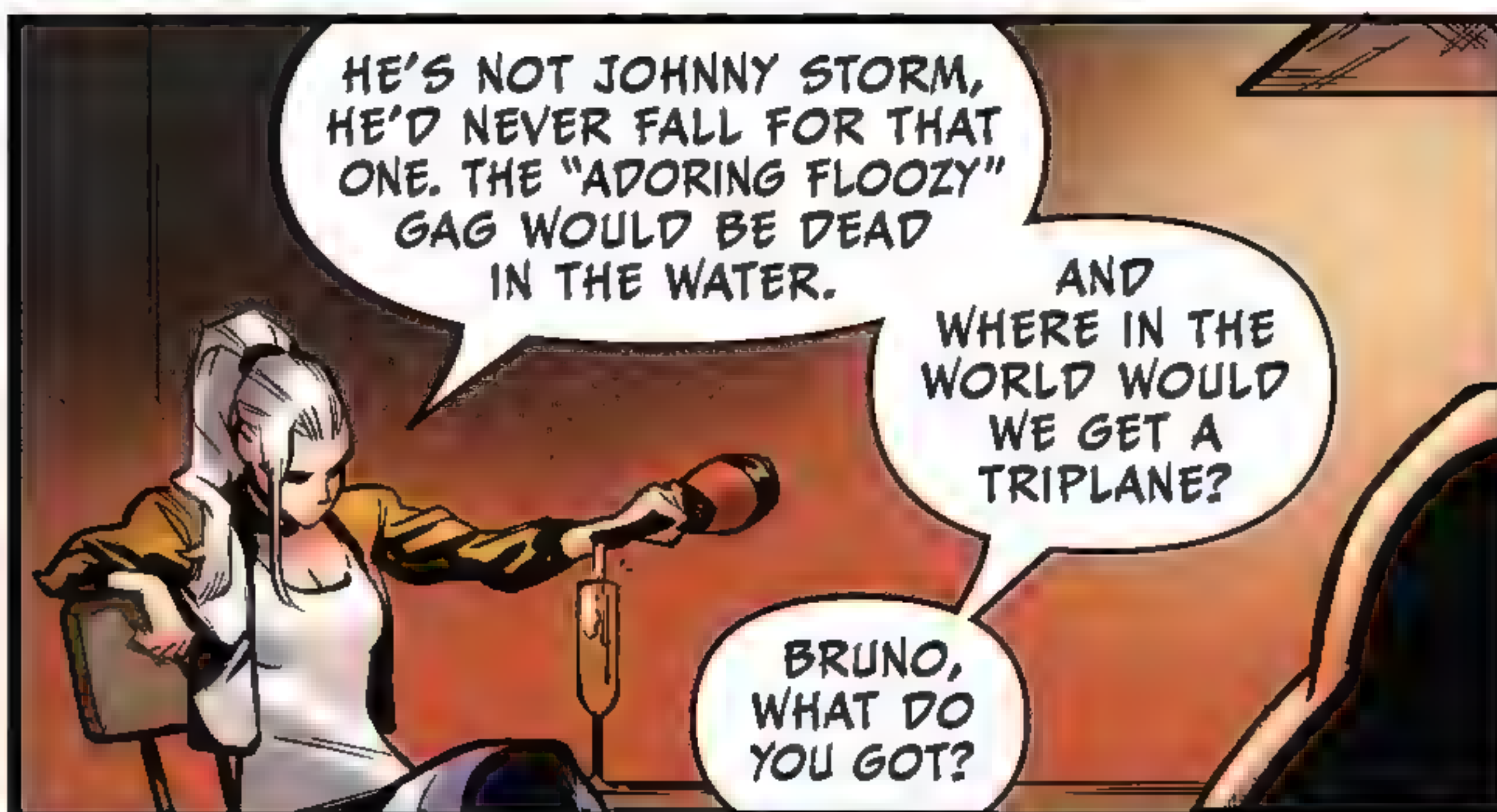
BESIDES, WE'D NEED A BADGER FOR THE WAGERING VICAR AND I'M **NOT** BREAKING INTO THE ZOO AGAIN.



WOMEN!

HE'S A NOTORIOUS WOMANIZER!

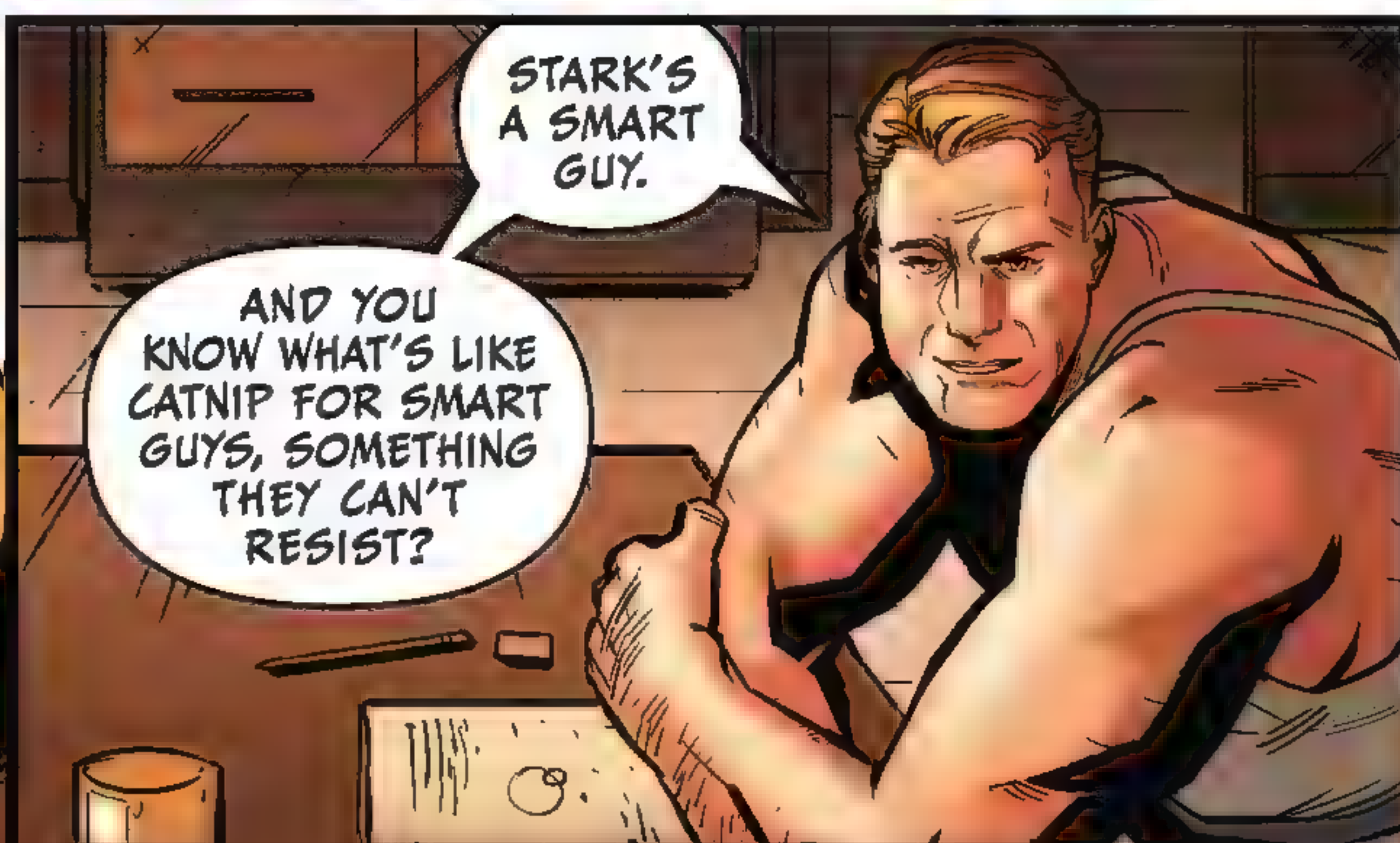
THE **SEVENTEEN STEPBROTHERS** IS THE ONLY PLAY.



HE'S NOT JOHNNY STORM, HE'D NEVER FALL FOR THAT ONE. THE "ADORING FLOOZY" GAG WOULD BE DEAD IN THE WATER.

AND WHERE IN THE WORLD WOULD WE GET A **TRIPLANE**?

BRUNO, WHAT DO YOU GOT?



STARK'S A SMART GUY.

AND YOU KNOW WHAT'S LIKE CATNIP FOR SMART GUYS, SOMETHING THEY CAN'T RESIST?



"SOMEONE
DISAGREEIN'
WITH 'EM."

"NOW WE'RE TALKING."

"THE DESPINAN AMBASSADOR."

"EXACTLY.
THE DESPINAN
AMBASSADOR."

MS. GROS.

THANK YOU
FOR COMING
TO SEE ME.



I CAN
SEE IT
NOW.

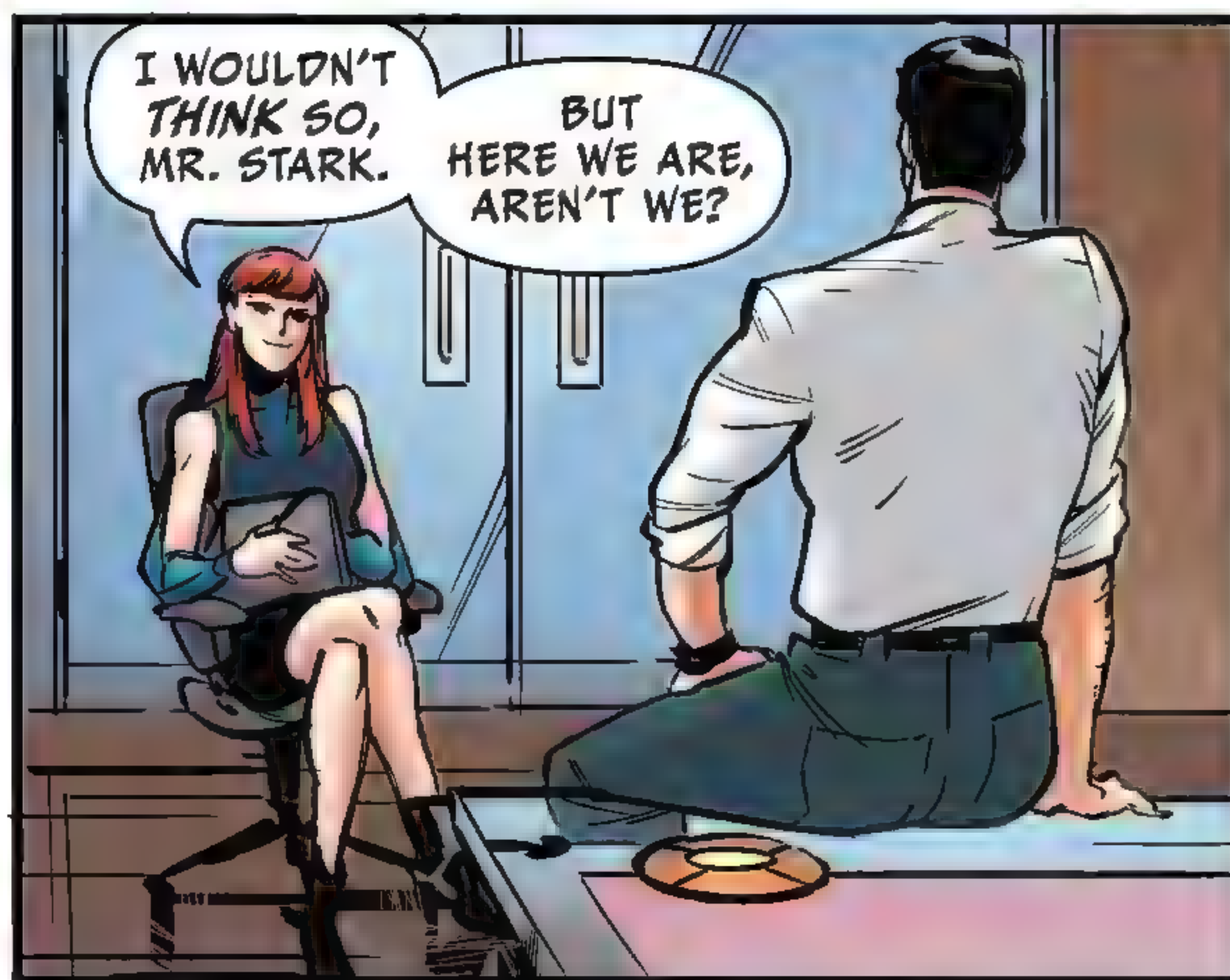
A PLUCKY SCIENCE
REPORTER WITH AN
AX TO GRIND.



I MUST
ADMIT, UNTIL
IT WAS BROUGHT
TO MY ATTENTION,
I WAS UNAWARE
OF YOUR WORK.

GOOD
WORK, LET
ME SAY.

THOUGH I CAN'T
SAY THAT I AGREE WITH
OR UNDERSTAND YOUR...
ANIMOSITY FOR ME?



I WOULDN'T
THINK SO,
MR. STARK.

BUT
HERE WE ARE,
AREN'T WE?



WE'LL NEED TO LAY SOME GROUNDWORK.

FOX, WORK ME UP A FULL BACKGROUND. EDUCATION, SOCIAL, BIRTH CERTIFICATE. SOCIAL MEDIA. BIOMETRICS RIGHT DOWN TO THE DNA.

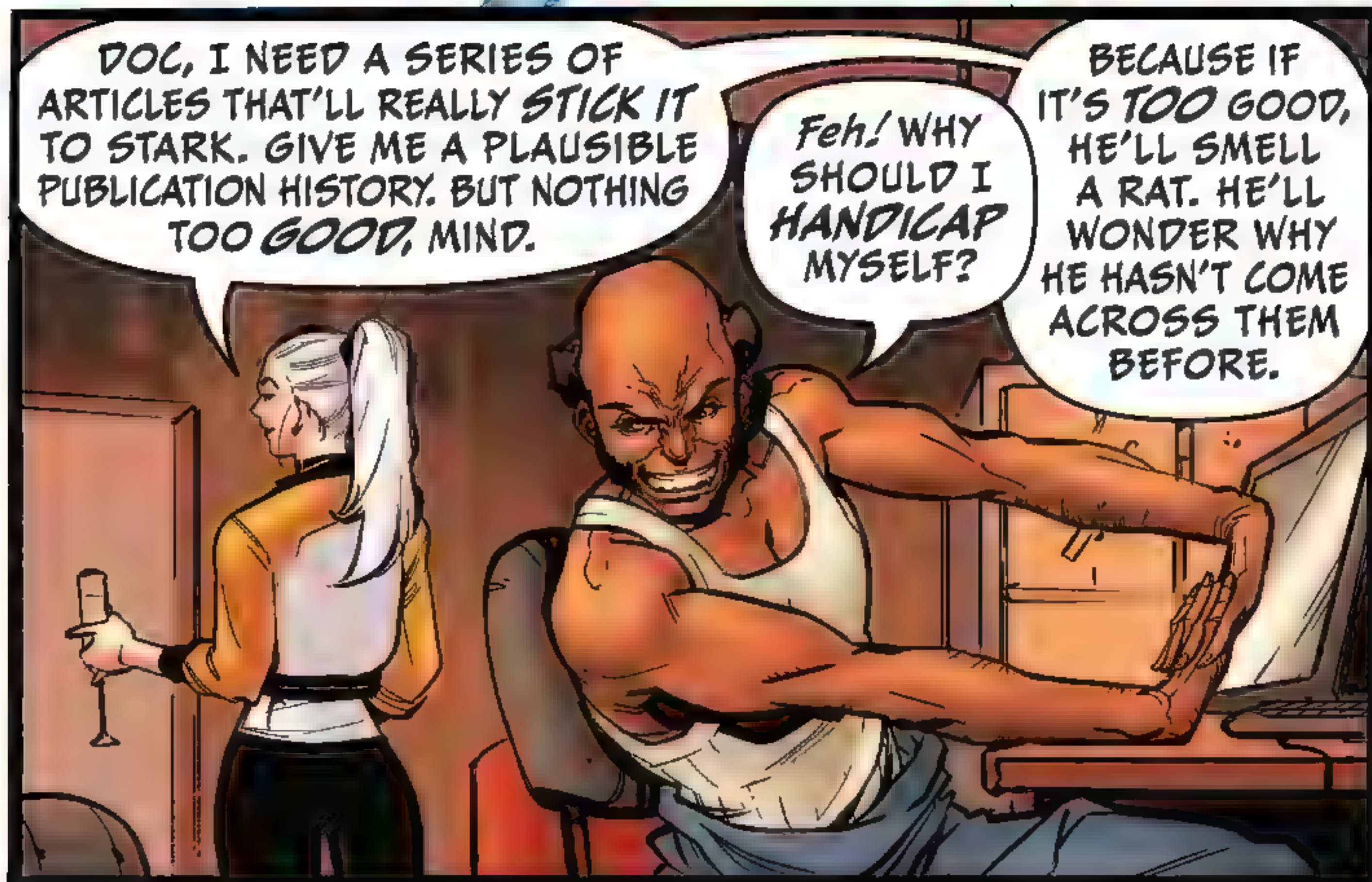
IF HE SEARCHES ME, I WANT HIM TO FIND OUR FAKE REPORTER.

CHILD'S PLAY FOR THE BLACK FOX, DARLING.



I SEE YOU DROPPED OUT OF M.I.T.?

I HAD MY OWN RESEARCH TO PURSUE. FORMAL ACADEMIA DIDN'T AGREE WITH ME.



DOC, I NEED A SERIES OF ARTICLES THAT'LL REALLY STICK IT TO STARK. GIVE ME A PLAUSIBLE PUBLICATION HISTORY. BUT NOTHING TOO GOOD, MIND.

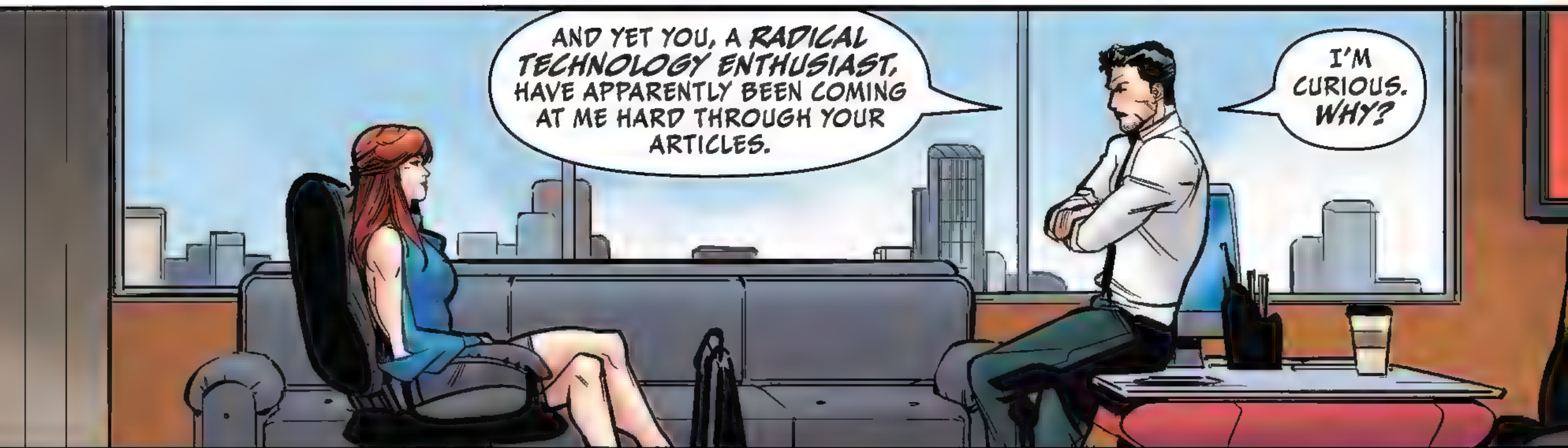
Feh! WHY SHOULD I HANDICAP MYSELF?

BECAUSE IF IT'S TOO GOOD, HE'LL SMELL A RAT. HE'LL WONDER WHY HE HASN'T COME ACROSS THEM BEFORE.



NOW, I'VE READ YOUR ARTICLES. I'M SURPRISED--USUALLY THE PEOPLE WHO ARE SO... **NAKEDLY CRITICAL** OF ME TEND TO COME FROM THE OTHER DIRECTION.

YOU KNOW, THE LUDDITES, THE REGRESSIVE, ANTI-TECH TYPES.



AND YET YOU, A **RADICAL TECHNOLOGY ENTHUSIAST**, HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN COMING AT ME HARD THROUGH YOUR ARTICLES.

I'M CURIOUS. **WHY?**



IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE A COWARD.

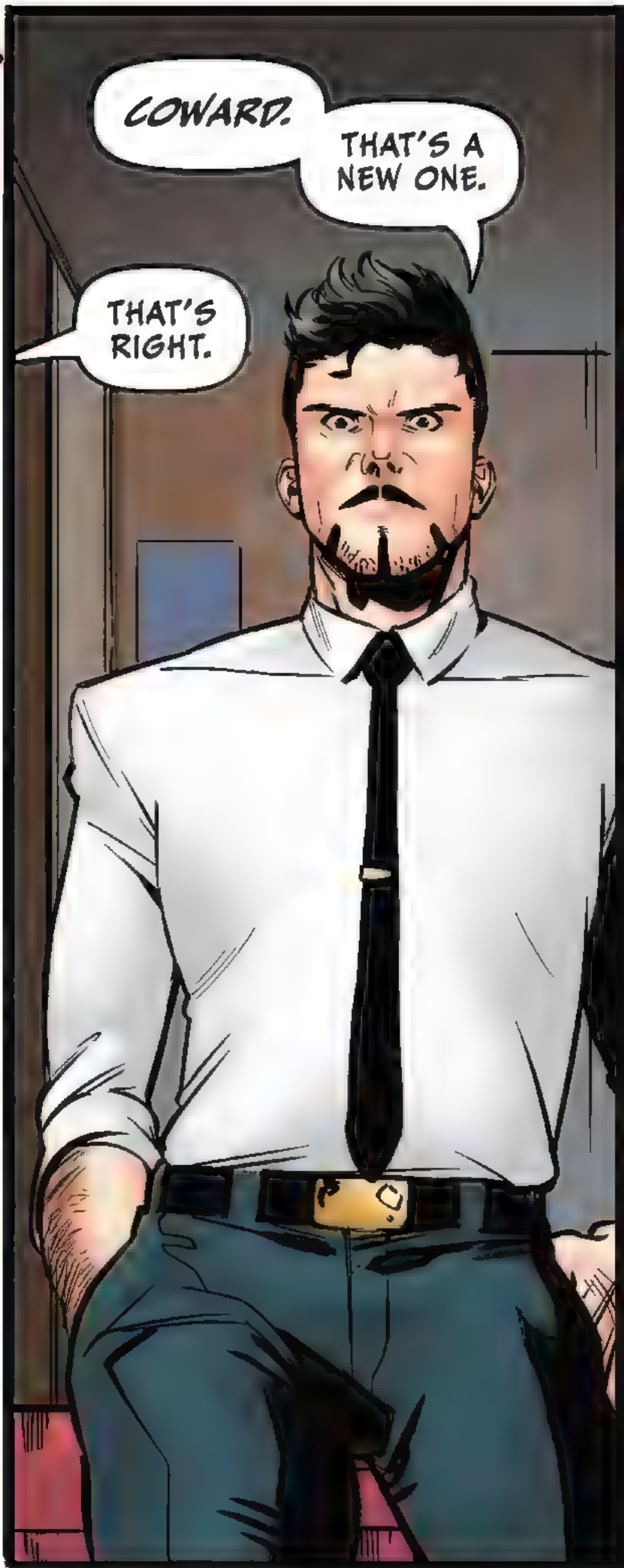


COWARD?!

YES! YES!

HAHAHA!

HE'S GOING TO HATE THAT!



COWARD.

THAT'S A NEW ONE.

THAT'S RIGHT.



BUT YOU KNEW THAT, IF YOU READ MY ARTICLES.

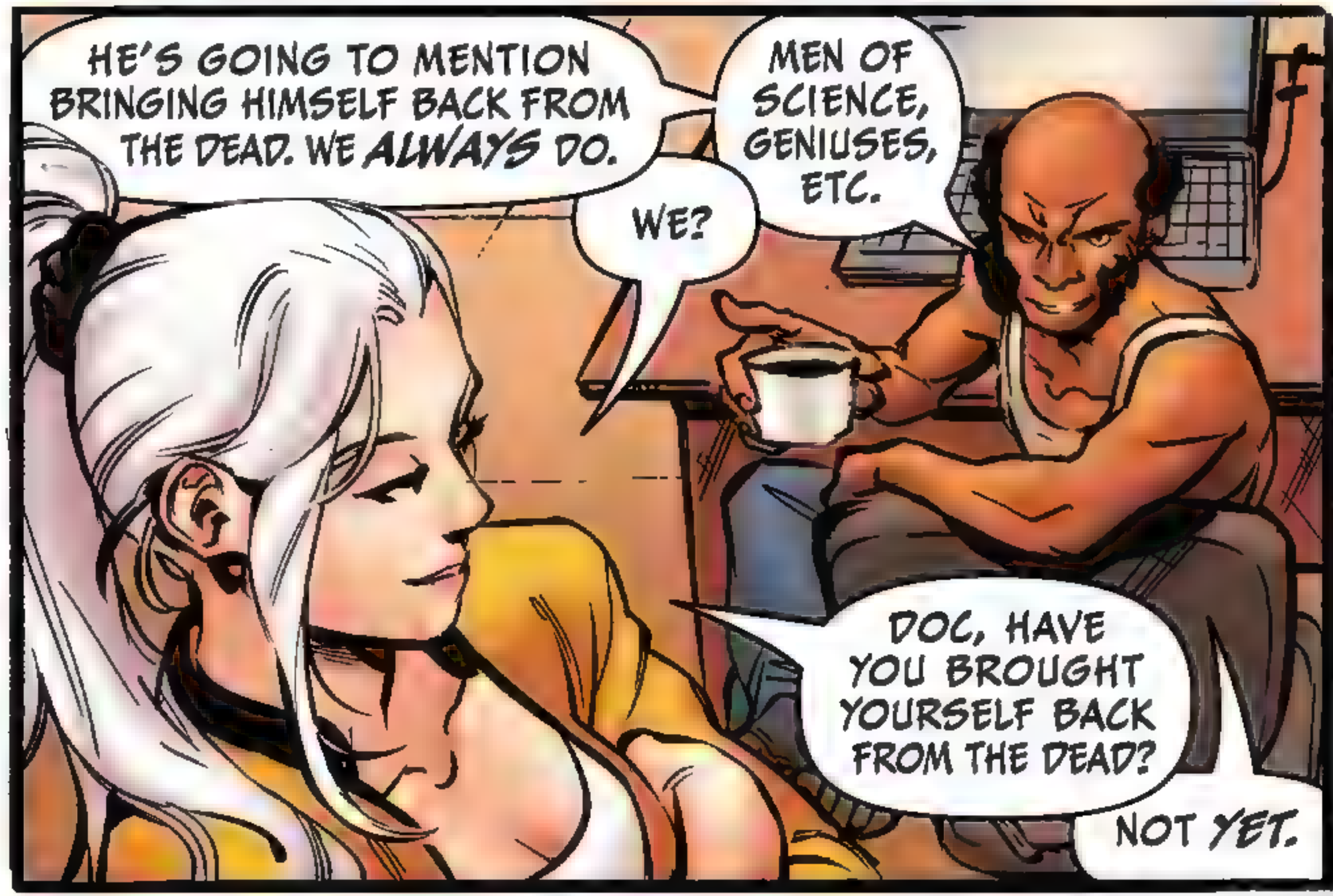
YOU HAVE A MIND LIKE NONE OTHER. YOU HAVE RESOURCES TO RIVAL ANY OTHER ORGANIZATION ON THE PLANET.



BUT YOU JUST KEEP THINKING SO SMALL.

SMALL?!

DID YOU MISS THE PART WHERE I BROUGHT MYSELF BACK FROM THE DEAD?



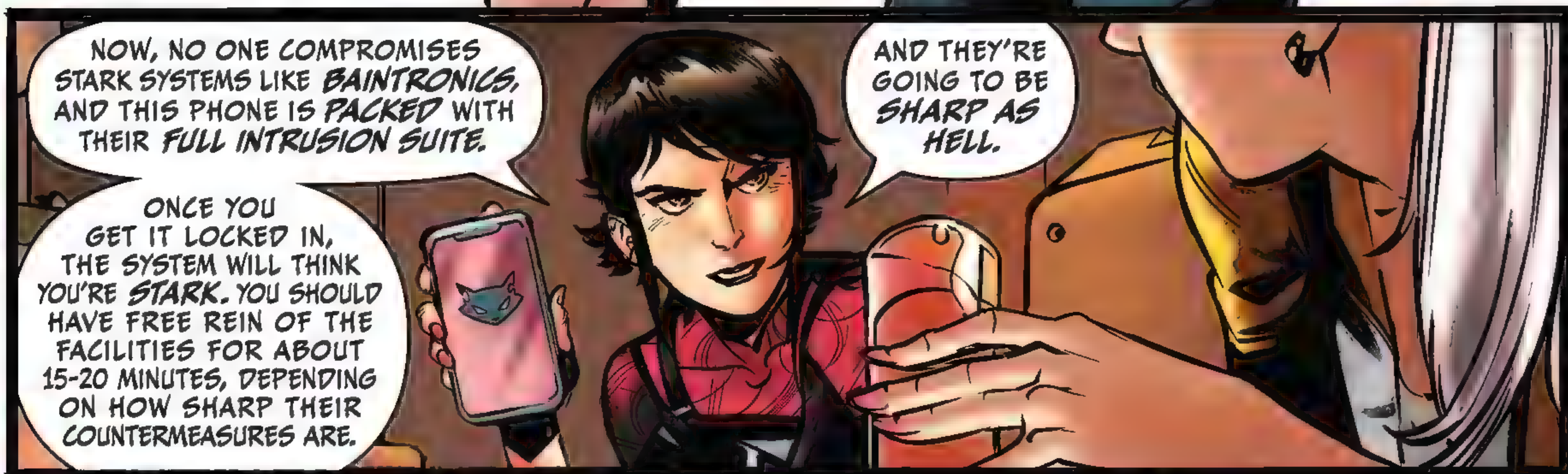
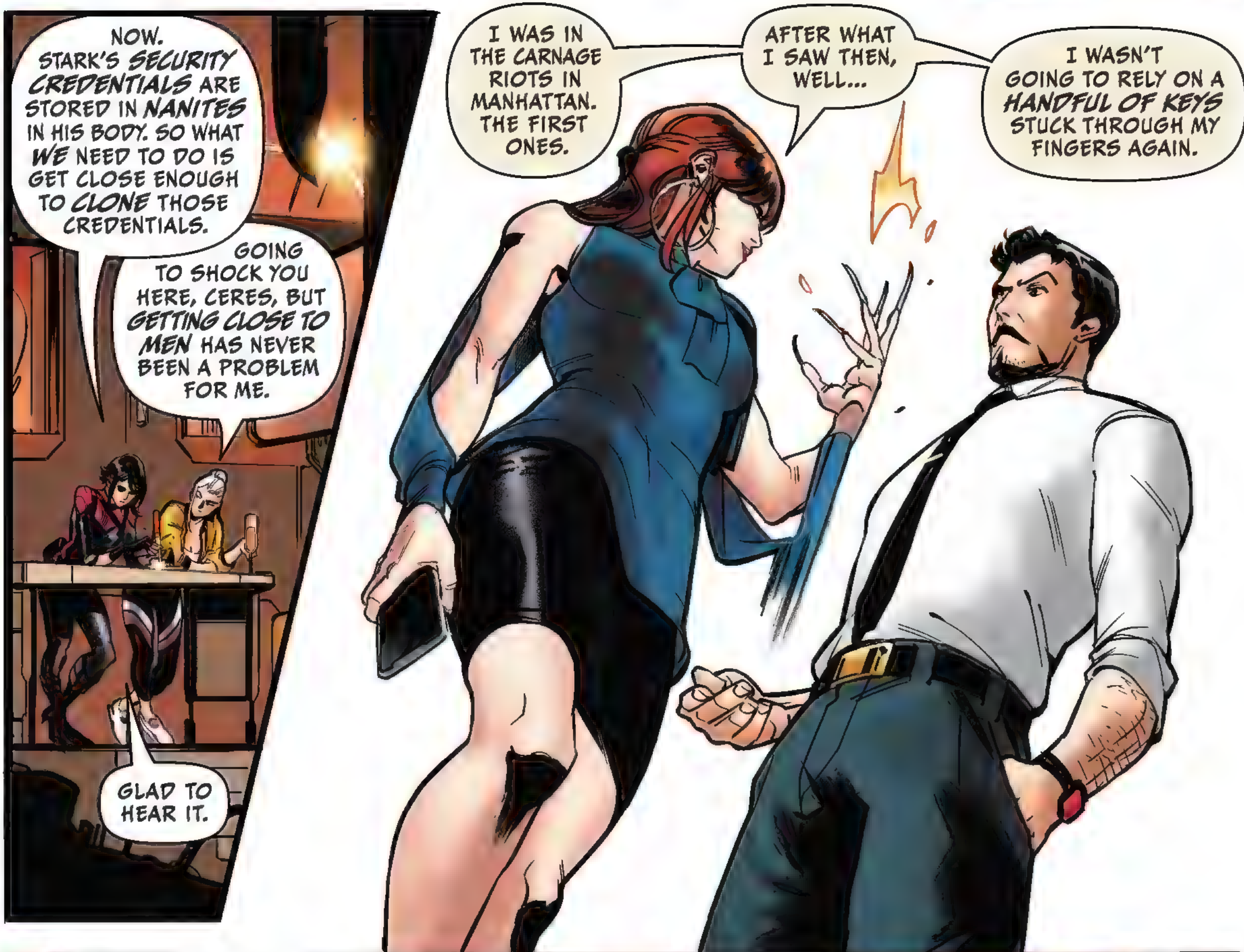
HE'S GOING TO MENTION BRINGING HIMSELF BACK FROM THE DEAD. WE ALWAYS DO.

MEN OF SCIENCE, GENIUSES, ETC.

WE?

DOC, HAVE YOU BROUGHT YOURSELF BACK FROM THE DEAD?

NOT YET.





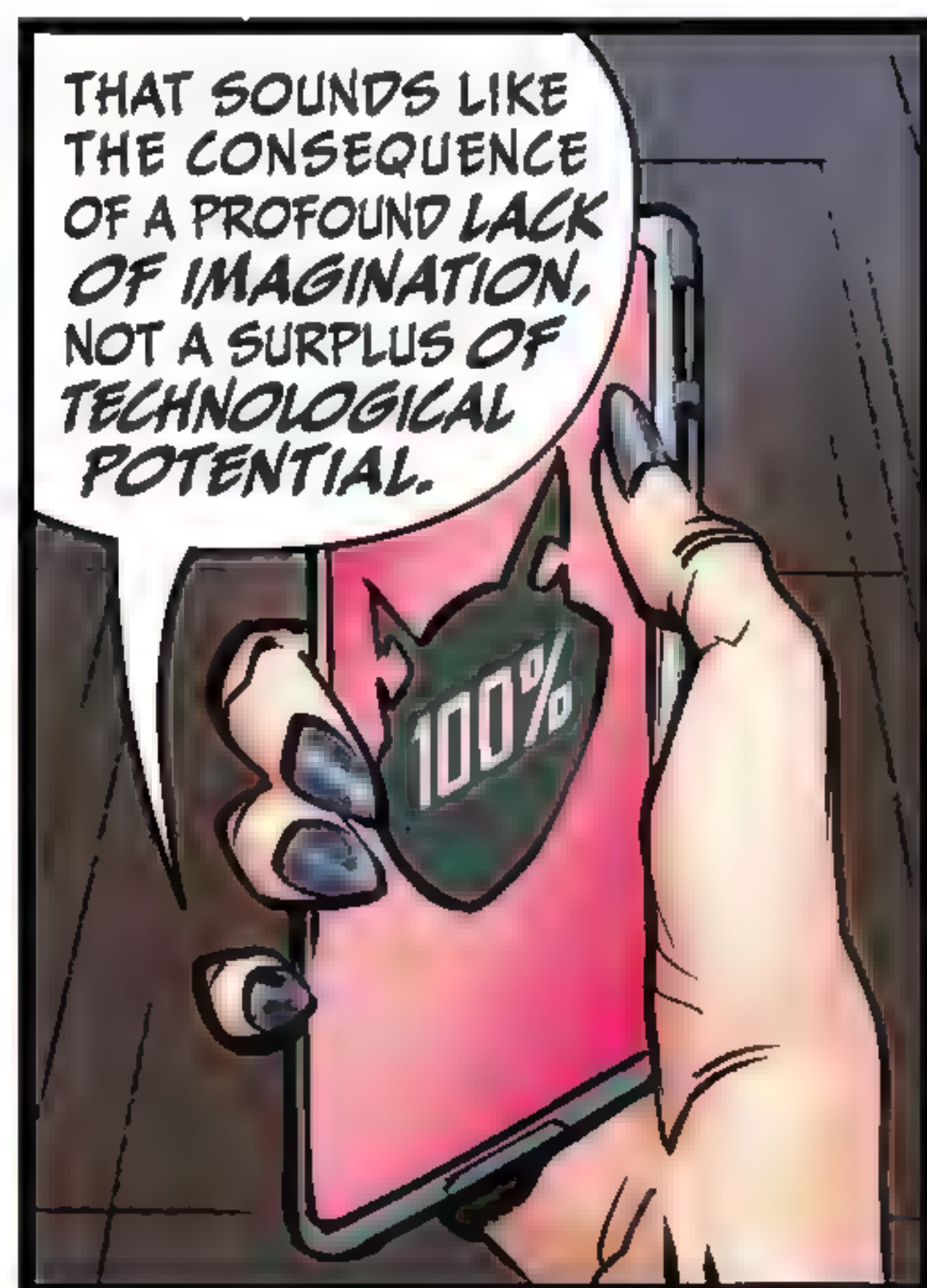
I GET IT, I *DO*. WE'RE ALL UGLY GIANT BAGS OF MOSTLY WATER. WHY *NOT* BE BETTER?

BUT IT'S NOT THAT *SIMPLE*.

THIS WORK IS EXQUISITE, BY THE WAY.



REBUILDING YOURSELF COMES WITH A WHOLE HOST OF NEW PROBLEMS... EXISTENTIAL ONES.



THAT SOUNDS LIKE THE CONSEQUENCE OF A PROFOUND LACK OF IMAGINATION, NOT A SURPLUS OF TECHNOLOGICAL POTENTIAL.



THIS RAP AIN'T GOING TO HOLD UP LONG, BOSS. IT AIN'T WHAT YOU'D CALL "PHILOSOPHICALLY COHERENT."

I ONLY NEED TO KEEP HIM ON THE HOOK LONG ENOUGH TO LOCK HIS SECURITY CREDENTIALS, BRUNO. AFTER THAT, I NEED A DISTRACTION.



STARK UNLIMITED EMPLOYEES:

WE ARE EXPERIENCING A SUPERHUMAN AGGRESSION EVENT.

PLEASE GATHER AT YOUR DESIGNATED MUSTER POINTS.

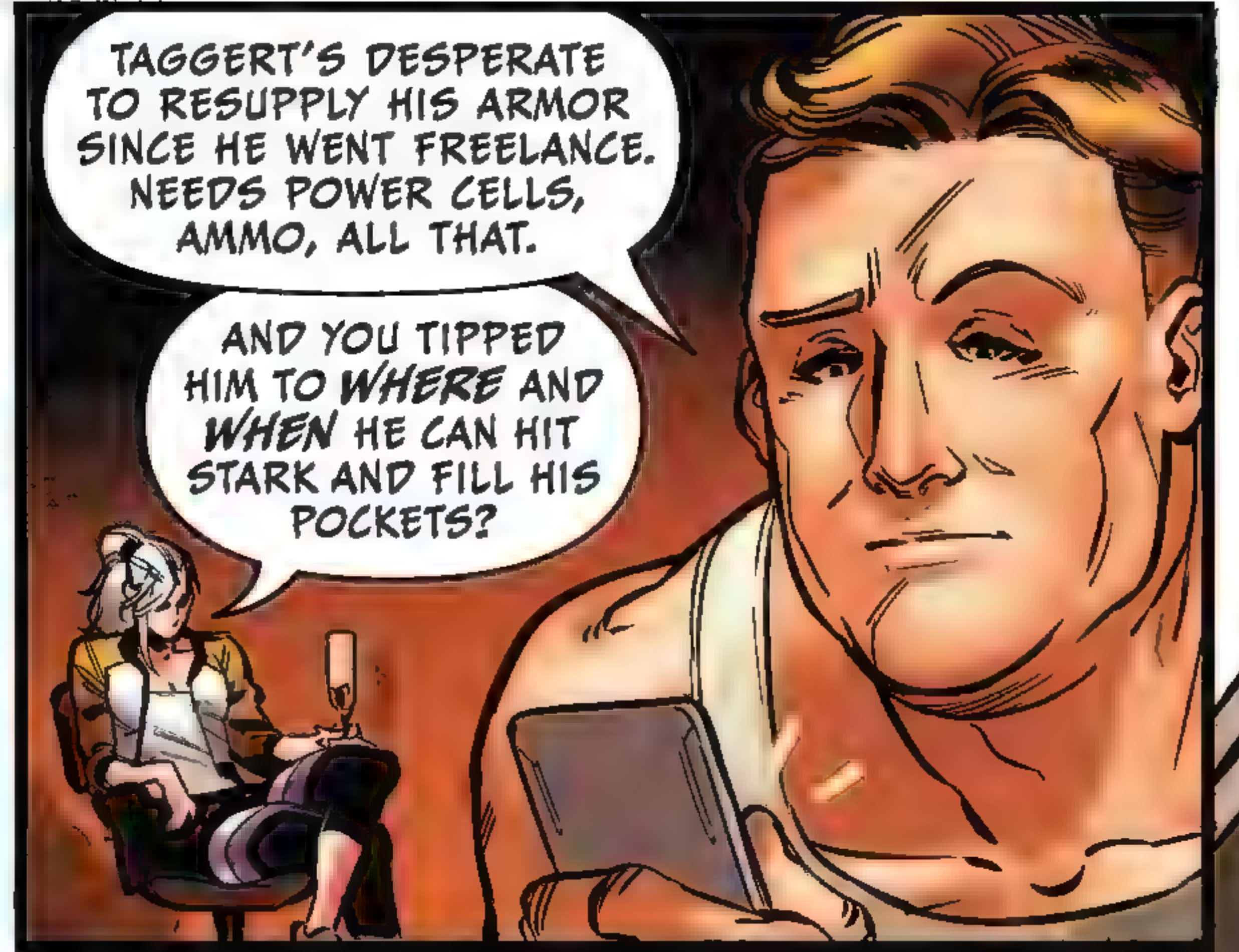
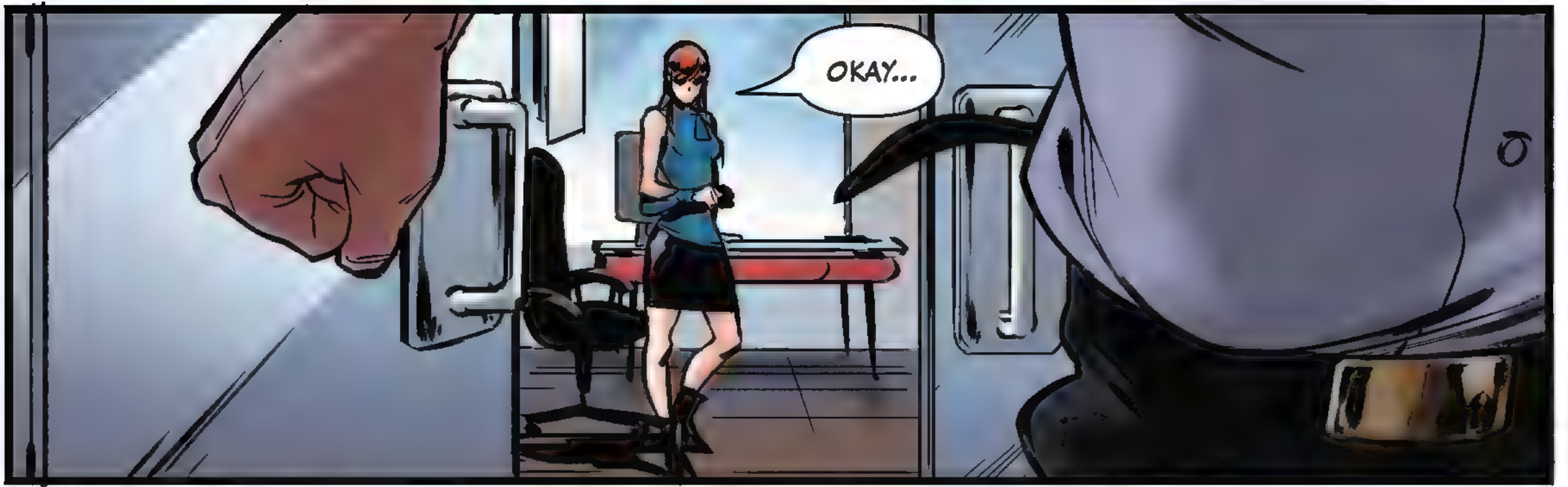
Oh, FOR...

WHAT-- WHAT IS IT?!

STAY HERE, YOU'LL BE SAFE. I PROMISE.

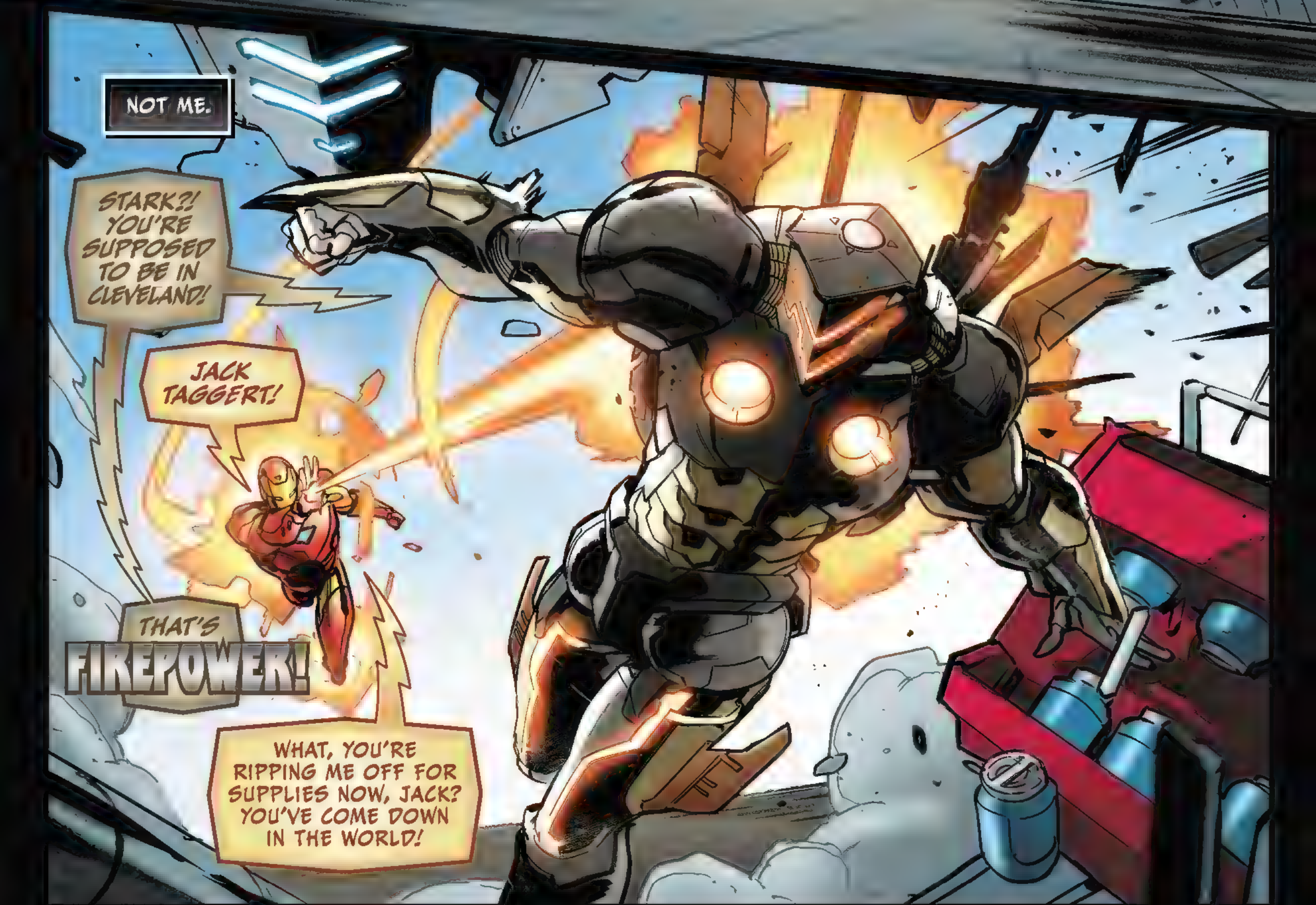
I'LL BE BACK, BUT I NEED TO GO DEAL WITH SOMEONE.

WHOEVER IT IS *THIS* TIME.





...WHO'D WANT TO
BE NORMAL FOLKS?



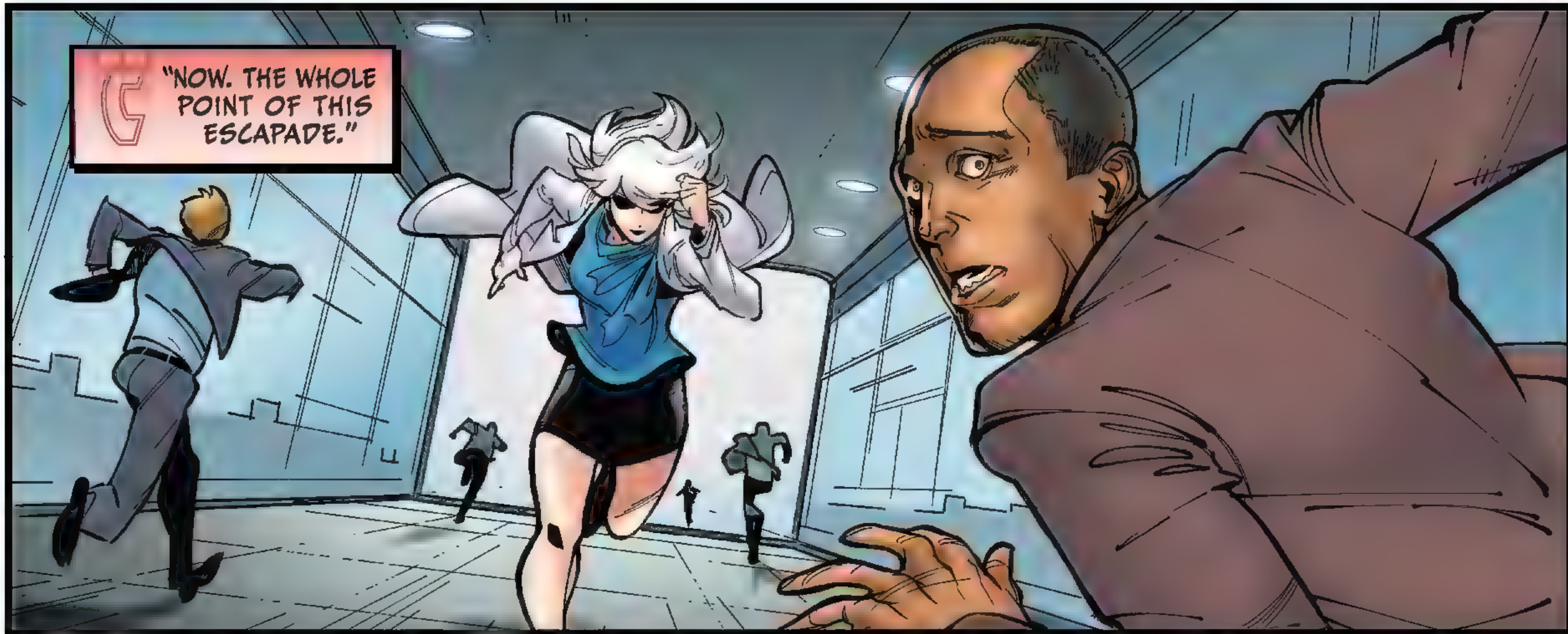
NOT ME.

STARK?!
YOU'RE
SUPPOSED
TO BE IN
CLEVELAND!

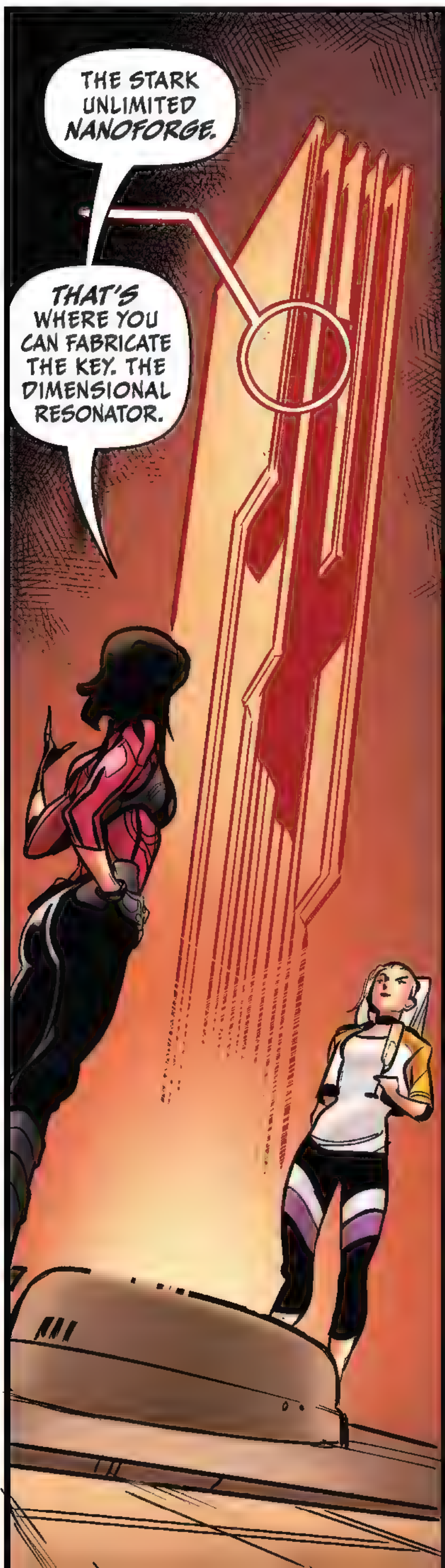
JACK
TAGGERT!

THAT'S
FIREPOWER!

WHAT, YOU'RE
RIPPING ME OFF FOR
SUPPLIES NOW, JACK?
YOU'VE COME DOWN
IN THE WORLD!



"NOW. THE WHOLE POINT OF THIS ESCAPE." *G*



THE STARK UNLIMITED NANOFORGE.

THAT'S WHERE YOU CAN FABRICATE THE KEY. THE DIMENSIONAL RESONATOR.

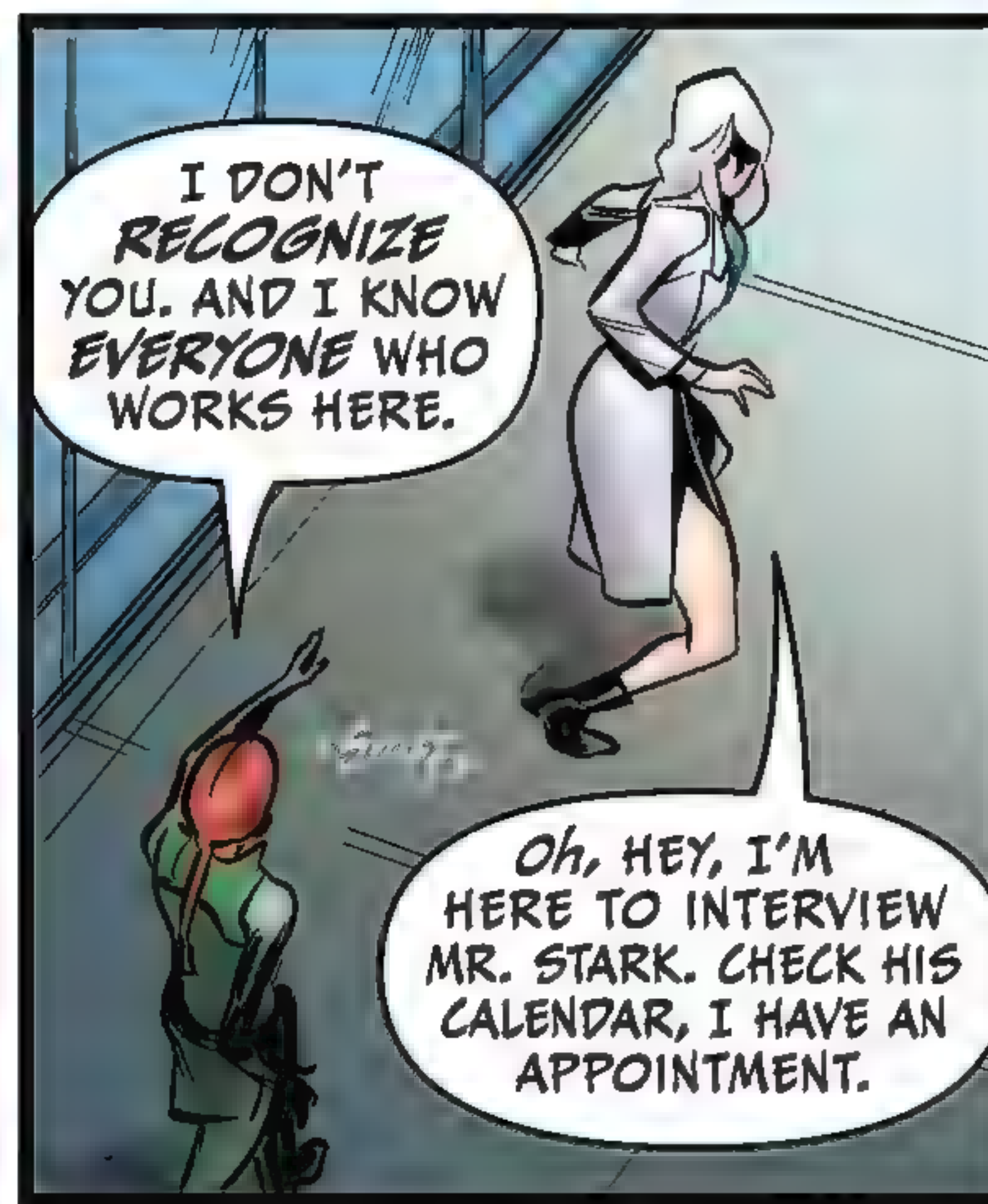


"GET IN, FAB THE KEY, GET OUT."



"YOU SHOULD HAVE PLENTY OF TIME BEFORE YOUR SECURITY CREDENTIALS EXPIRE, BUT DON'T DILLYDALLY."

HEY!



I DON'T RECOGNIZE YOU. AND I KNOW EVERYONE WHO WORKS HERE.

Oh, hey, I'm here to interview Mr. Stark. Check his calendar, I have an appointment.



SO WHAT'S WITH THE LAB COAT?!

AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUTSIDE OF YOUR DESIGNATED AREA?!

PUT YOUR HANDS UP, YOU'RE COMING WITH ME!

I SWEAR, YOU REDHEADS. IT'S LIKE YOU'RE COLLECTIVELY OUT TO GET ME.

LOOK, I
REALLY DON'T
HAVE TIME FOR
THIS. I'M ON A
SCHEDULE...

SHUT
UP!

=Sniff=

I HAD SHUT DOWN
MY IMPLANTED QUANTUM
PROBABILITY PULSATOR--
MY BAD LUCK MACHINE--
EARLIER. I DIDN'T WANT
STARK LOOKING AT IT
TOO CLOSELY WHEN HE
SCANNED ME.

I JUST
TURNED IT
BACK ON.

Aaagh!

Whoa!

NOW
THAT'S
SOME BAD
LUCK!

Tac!

LIKE I SAID,
I GOT A
SCHEDULE
TO KEEP...

CHACK!

...SO WHY
DON'T YOU
TAKE A LOAD
OFF AND LET
ME DO MY
JOB?

WHAT--*

JUST A
NARCPATCH.

LISTEN,
DON'T FEEL
BAD. I'M A PRO.
I EAT SECURITY
BOSSSES FOR
BREAKFAST.

Crunch!

IT MAKES ME
STRONG. LIKE
WHEATIES.



WELL,
THAT WAS
A DELAY
I DIDN'T
NEED.

BUT WE'RE
STILL GOOD.

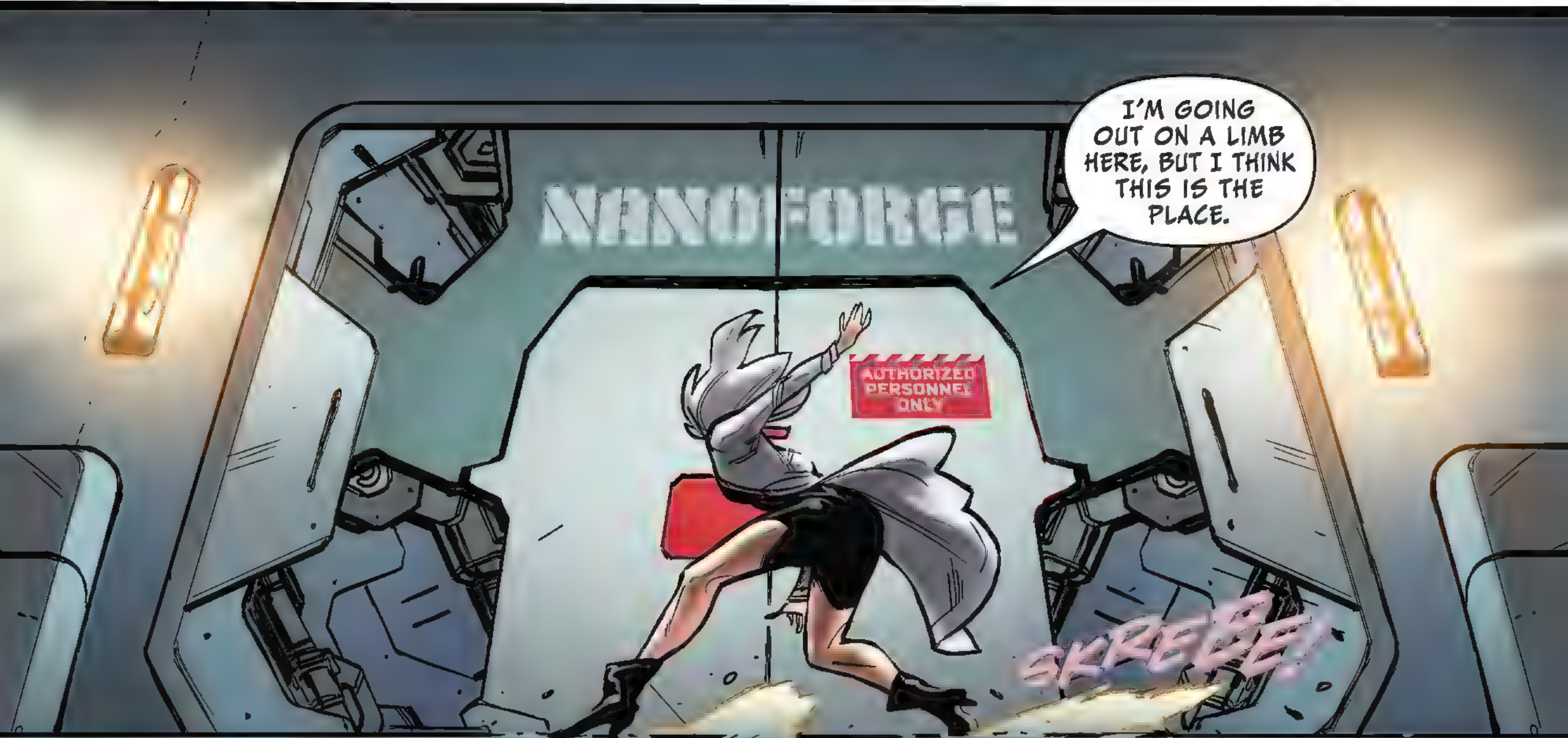


SO LONG AS THAT
CHUMP FIREPOWER
KEEPS STARK BUSY...



...WE'RE
GOOD AS
GOLD.

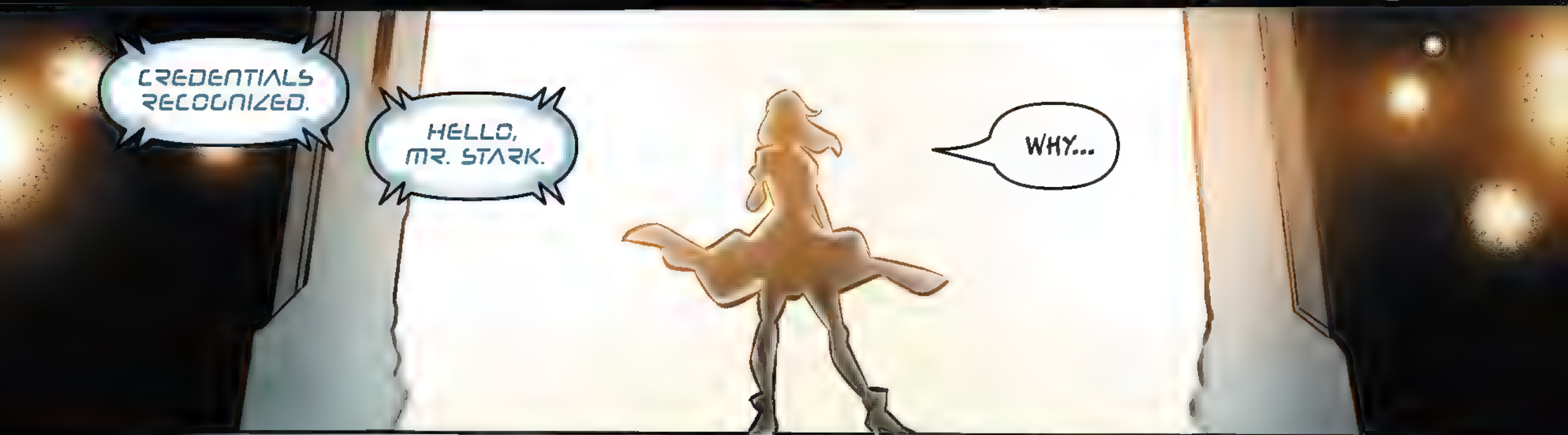
FINE AS
WINE.



I'M GOING
OUT ON A LIMB
HERE, BUT I THINK
THIS IS THE
PLACE.

AUTHORIZED
PERSONNEL
ONLY

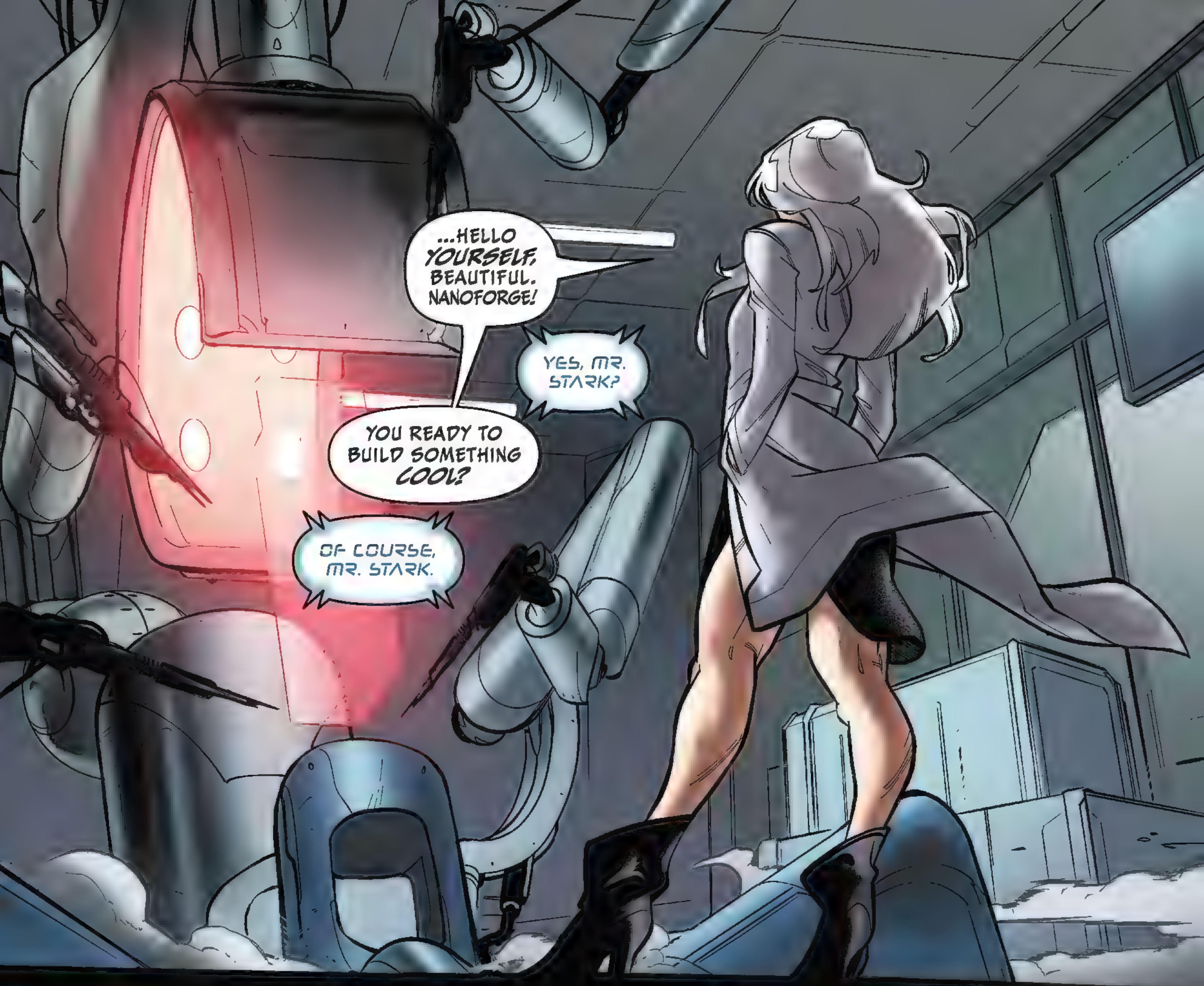
SKREEE!



CREDENTIALS
RECOGNIZED.

HELLO,
MR. STARK.

WHY...



...HELLO
YOURSELF,
BEAUTIFUL.
NANOFORGE!

YES, MR.
STARK?

YOU READY TO
BUILD SOMETHING
COOL?

OF COURSE,
MR. STARK.



OKAY,
NANOFORGE.
I NEED YOU TO
FABRICATE THE
ITEM ON THESE
SPECS, THEN
DELETE ALL
RECORDS OF IT.
GOT IT?

YES, MR.
STARK.

GOOD
BOY.

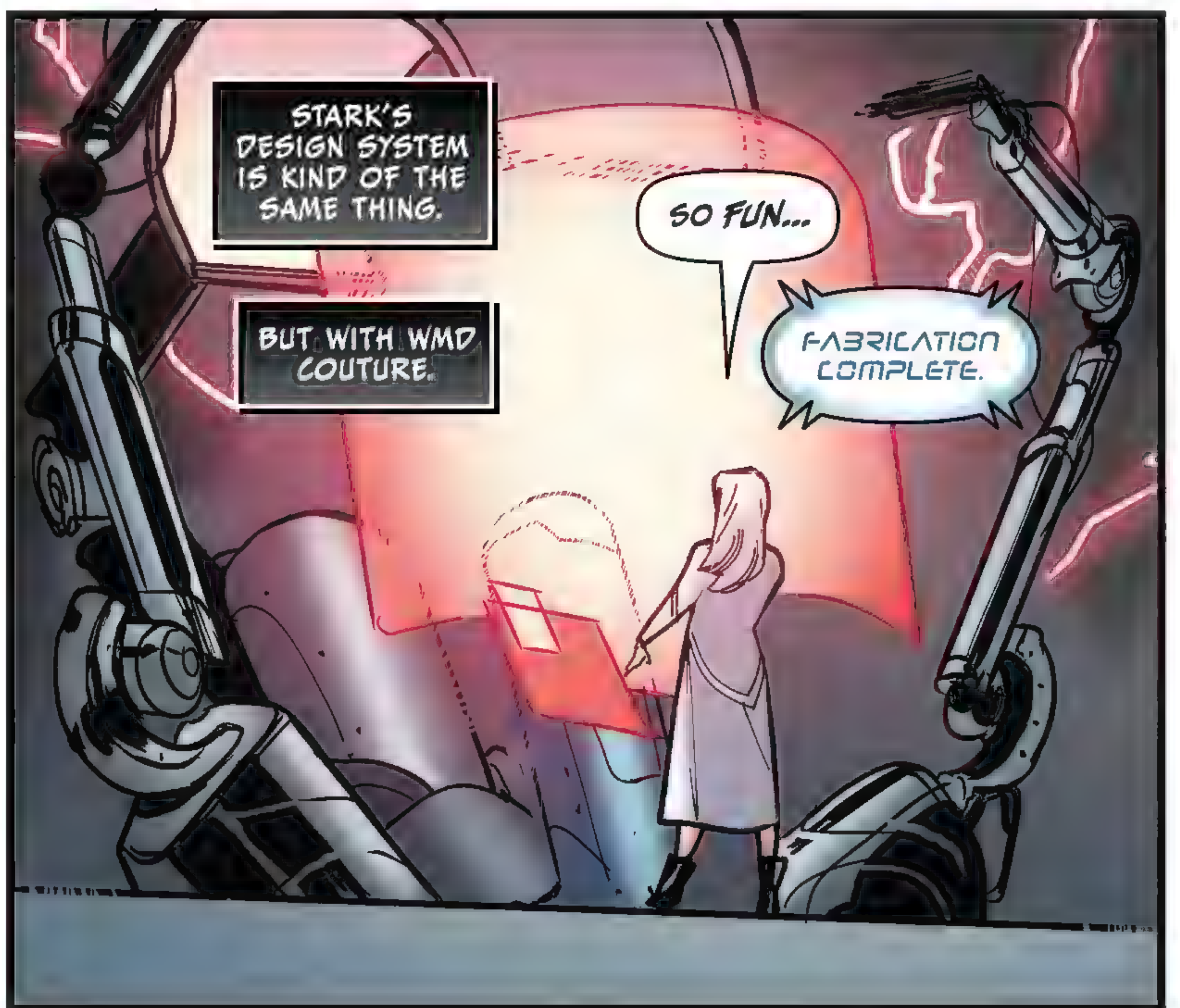
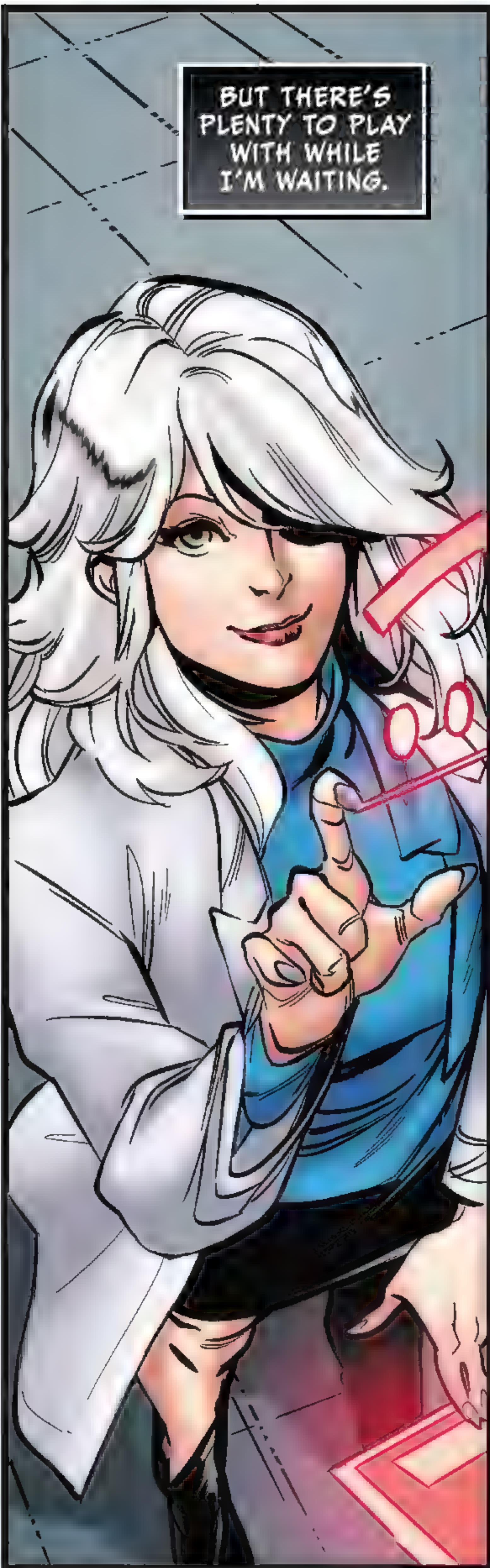
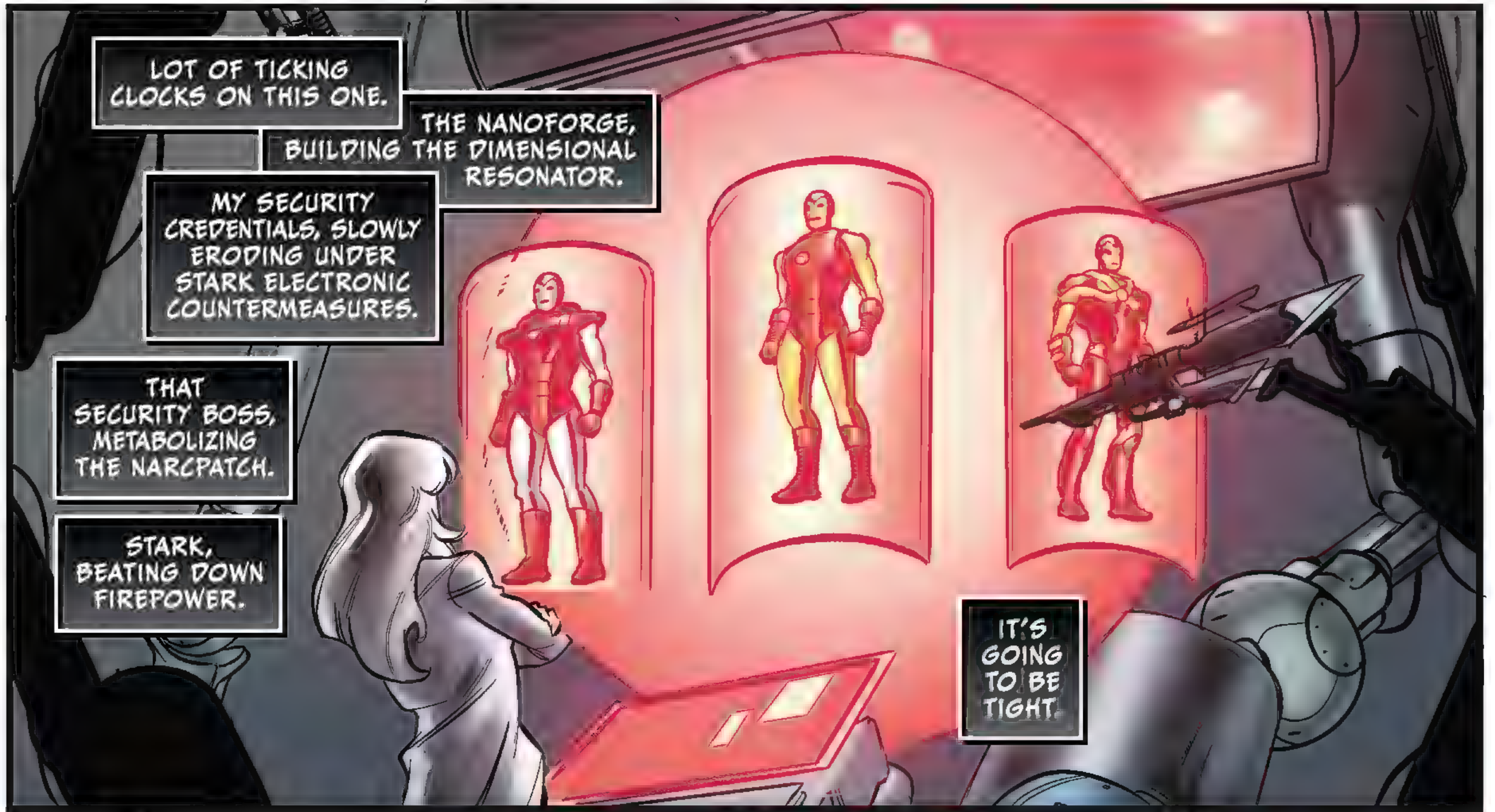


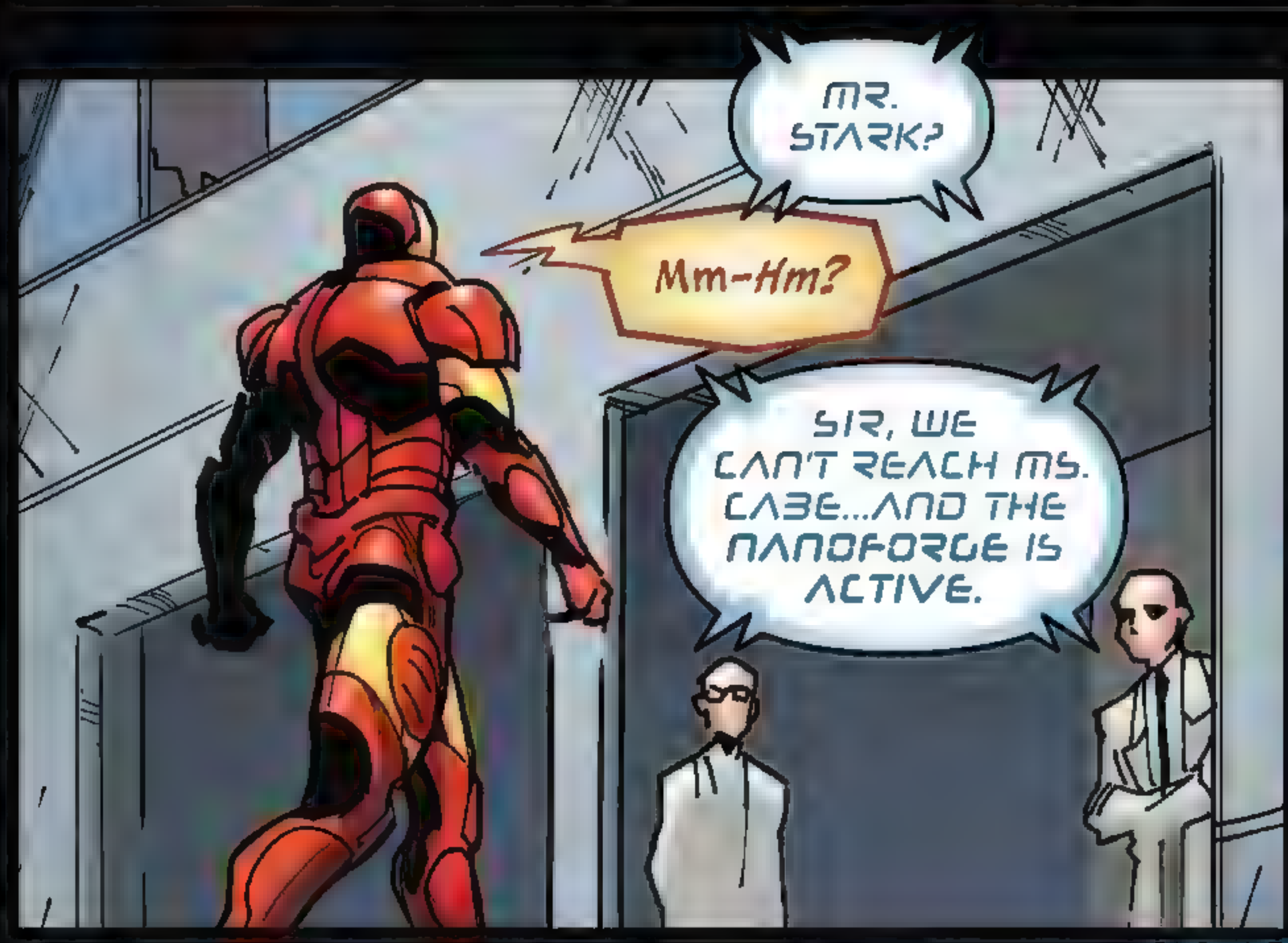
AND LET'S
GET ALL
THIS DONE
RIKKI-TIK,
Huh?

I AM NOT
FAMILIAR WITH
THAT IDIOM.

QUICKLY,
NANOFORGE.
GET IT DONE
QUICKLY.









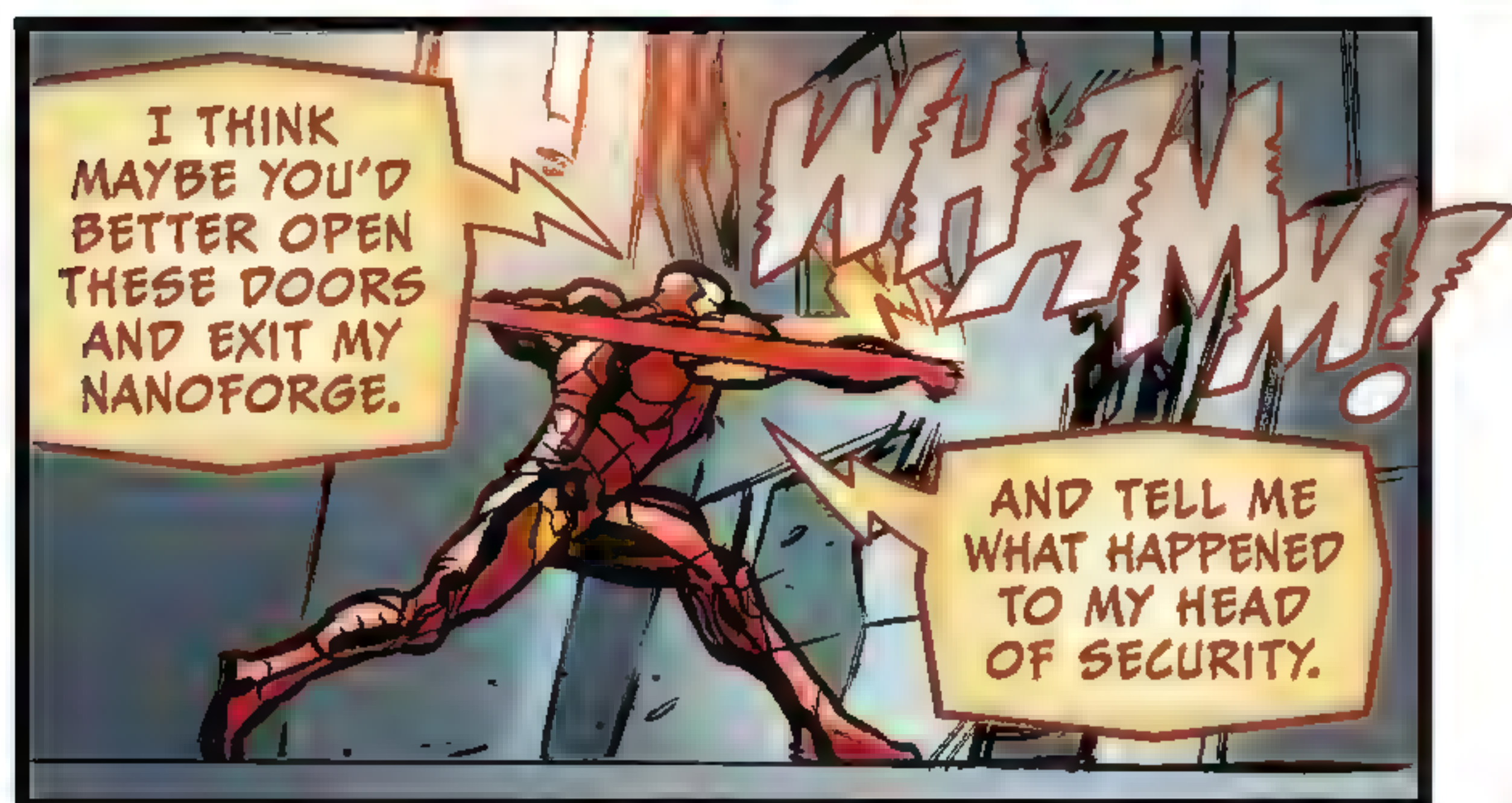
"...YOU ARE."

Oooh...
WELL DONE,
NANOFORGE!

THANK YOU,
MR. STARK.

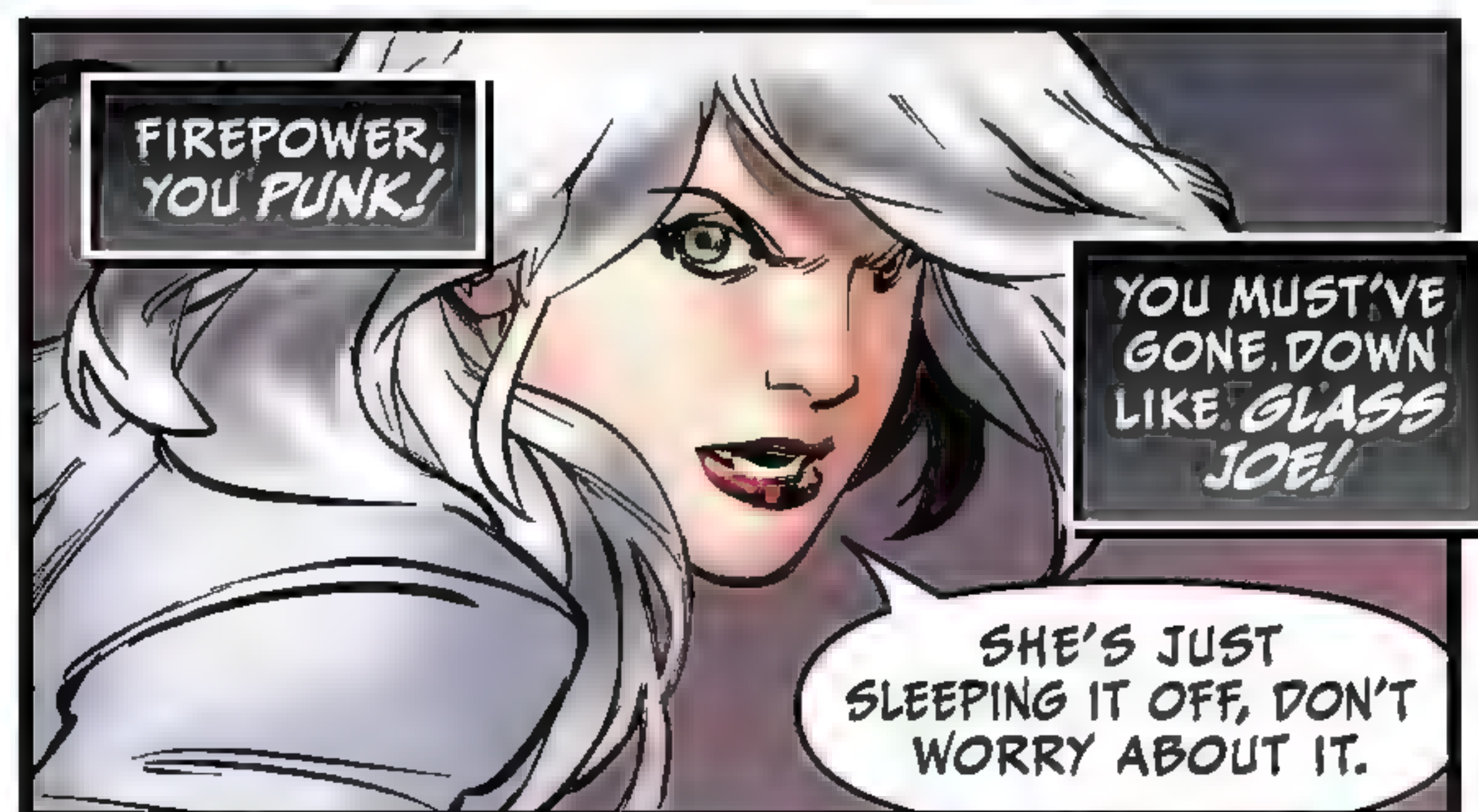


AAH!



I THINK
MAYBE YOU'D
BETTER OPEN
THESE DOORS
AND EXIT MY
NANOFORGE.

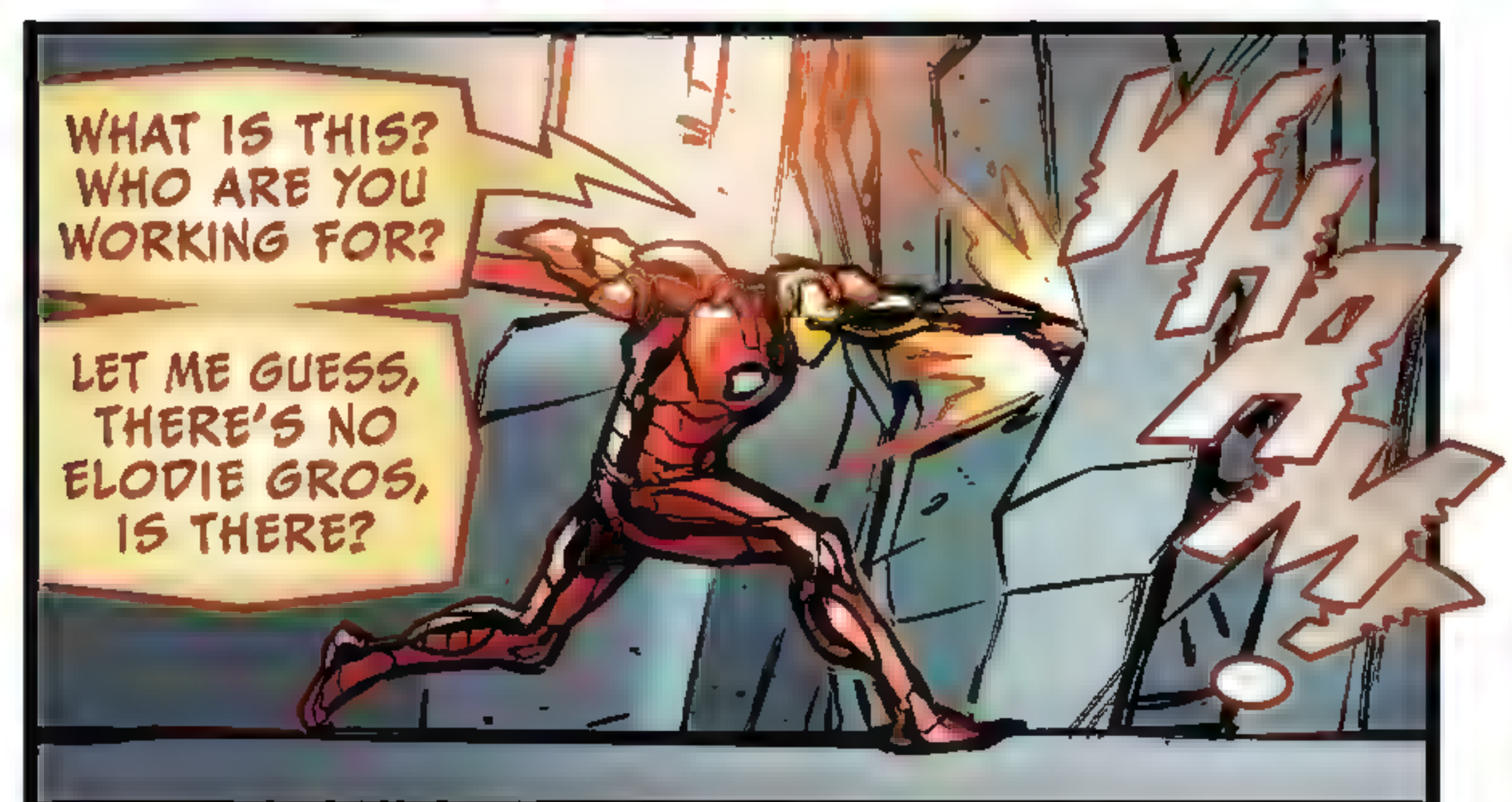
AND TELL ME
WHAT HAPPENED
TO MY HEAD
OF SECURITY.



FIREPOWER,
YOU PUNK!

YOU MUST'VE
GONE DOWN
LIKE GLASS
JOE!

SHE'S JUST
SLEEPING IT OFF, DON'T
WORRY ABOUT IT.



WHAT IS THIS?
WHO ARE YOU
WORKING FOR?

LET ME GUESS,
THERE'S NO
ELODIE GROS,
IS THERE?



NOPE.

INSULT TO
INJURY, I KNOW,
BUT I'M NOT A REAL
REDHEAD EITHER.

HAD YOU
GOING THOUGH,
DIDN'T I?

OKAY,
NANOFORGE.
GOT ANOTHER
JOB FOR
YOU.

YES, MR.
STARK?



THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY OUT OF THE NANOFORGE, WHOEVER YOU ARE.

AND IT'S THROUGH ME.

GIVE IT UP!



...AND DO IT UP IN A GLOSSY BLACK.

WHAT, AFTER I'VE COME ALL THIS WAY?

COME ON, TONY. WHERE'S THE FUN IN THAT?

AND WHAT THE HELL, THROW SOME CAT EARS ON IT.



I'M LOOKING AT YOUR SPOOFED CREDENTIALS.

8%

THEY'RE GOOD, I'LL GIVE YOU THAT. BAINTRONICS?

BUT THIS DOOR IS COMING DOWN REGARDLESS.



TIME'S ALMOST UP!

I'M COMING IN! THIS ISN'T GOING TO GO GREAT FOR YOU, LADY!



MEN

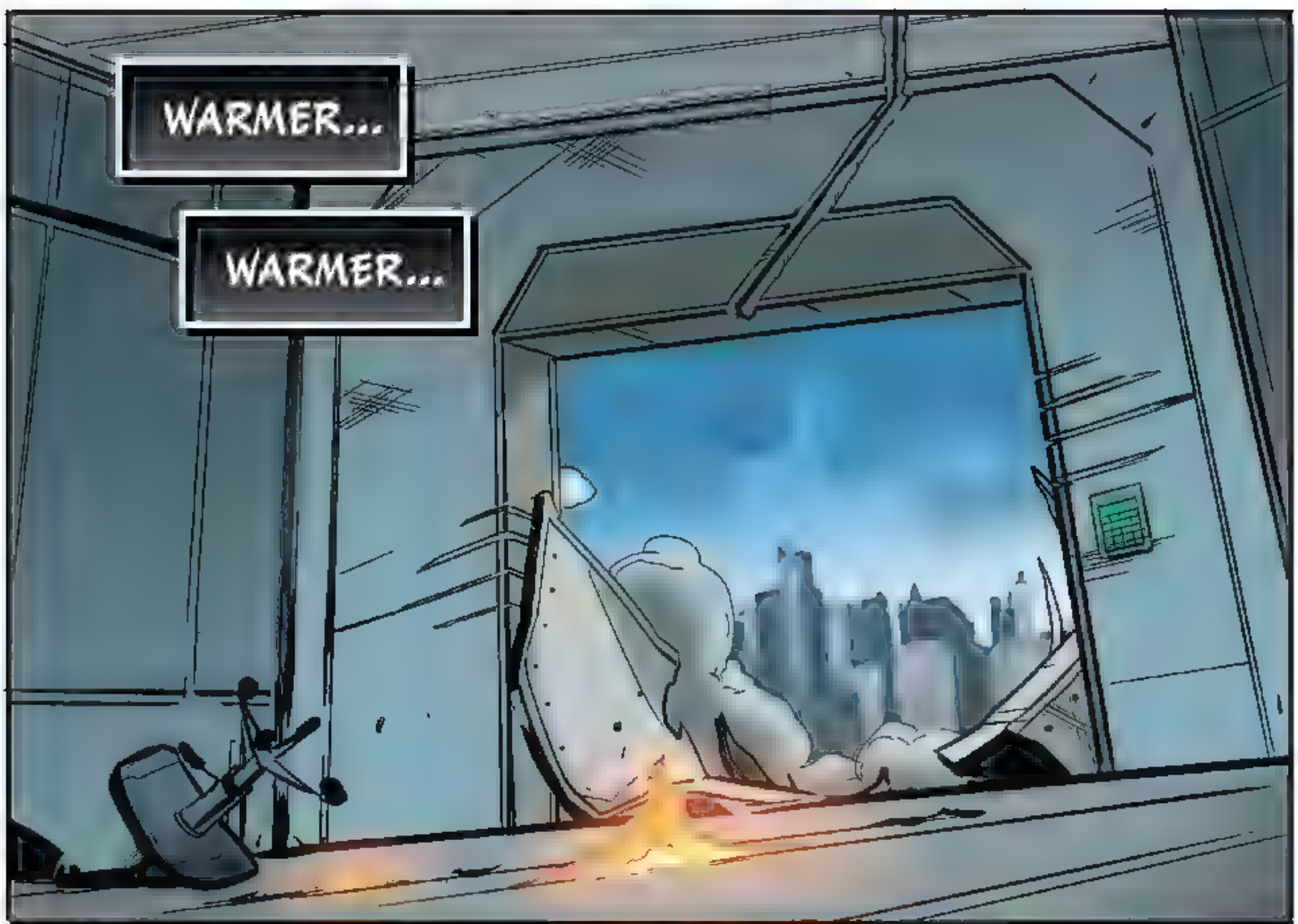
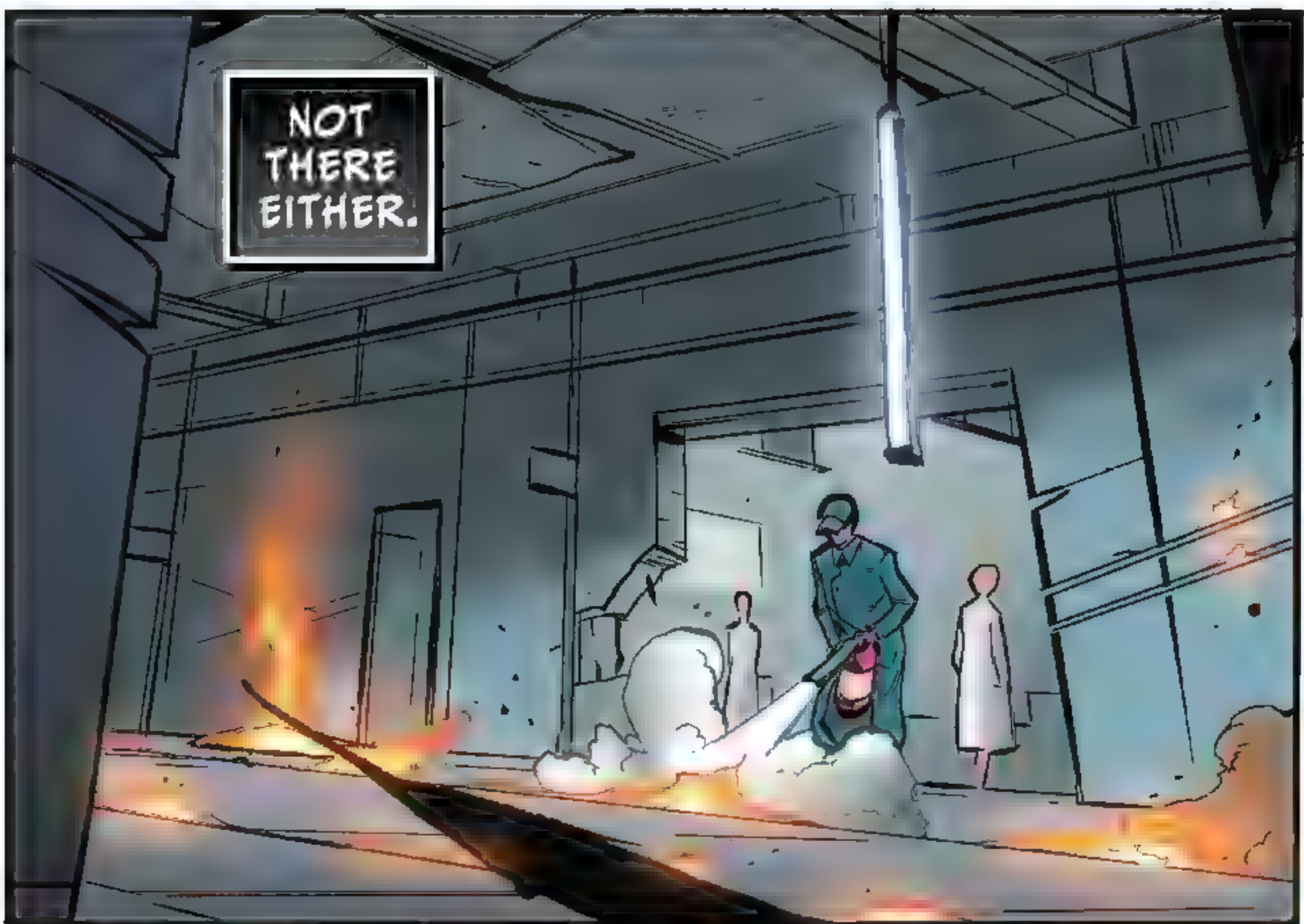
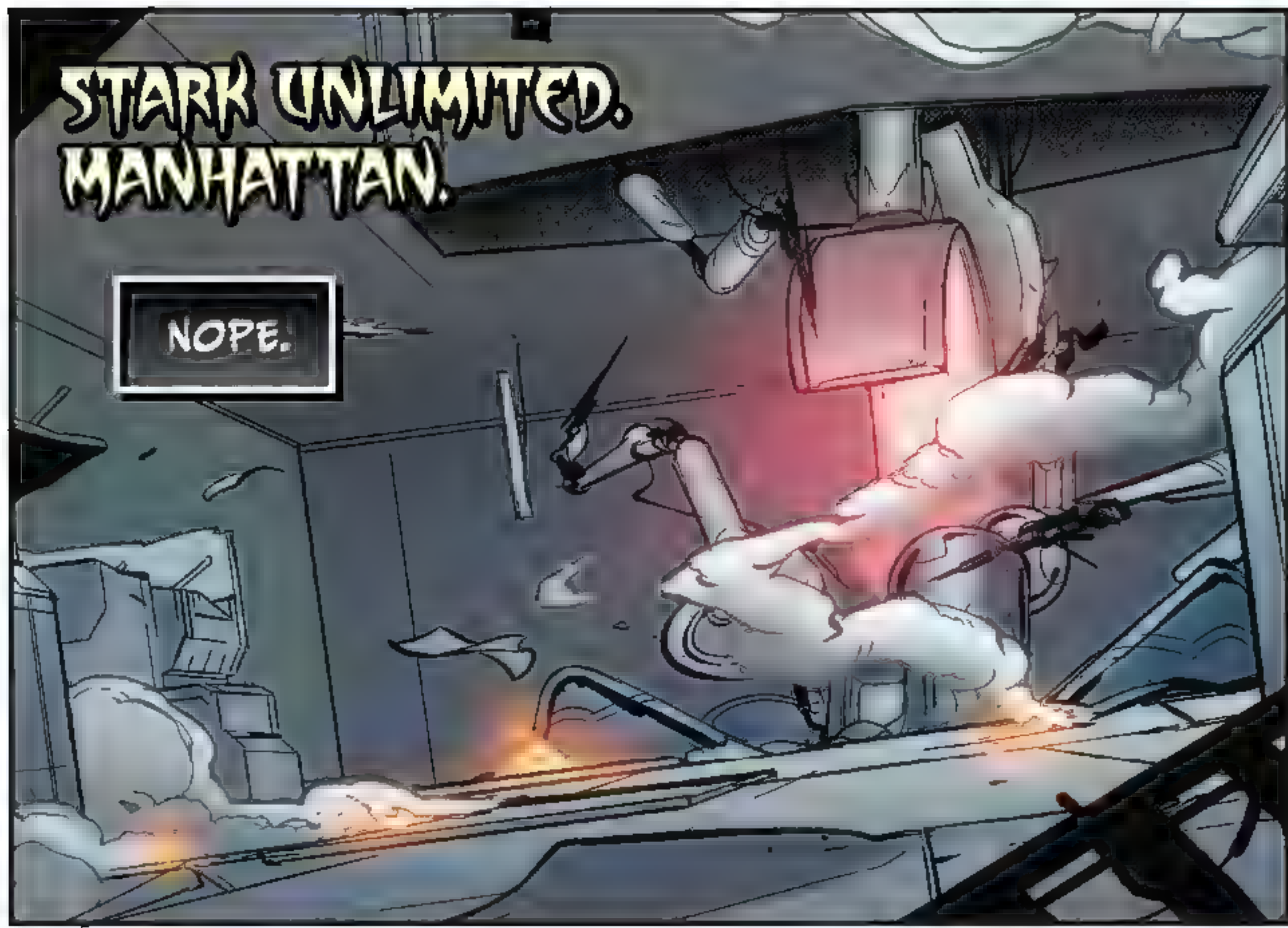
YOU HATE WAITING FOR A LADY TO GET DRESSED...



...BUT
COME
ON!

HOW
GREAT DO
I LOOK?!





THERE.

DON'T BE
FOOLED BY THE
SPEED METAL
EXTERIOR.

LAND,
POWER
DOWN,
AND--

YAAAGH!

IT'S ME, THE
BLACK CAT.

THROWING
DOWN WITH
IRON MAN
AT 1,000 FEET
ABOVE SEA
LEVEL.

A PRETTY
GOOD DAY!





EXPERT SYSTEMS
TAKE CARE OF
THE TRICKY NUTS
AND BOLTS OF
FLIGHT, KEEP
MY E.C.M. UP
AND RUNNING--

--AND MY
TRANSMISSIONS
CRISP AND
ENCRYPTED.

WITH THE
SHOCK MANTLE
PUTTING OUT SO MUCH
ELECTROMAGNETIC
INTERFERENCE--

--STARK WOULD HAVE A
BETTER CHANCE PUNCHING
OUT *GOD* THAN GETTING
A WEAPONS LOCK.

THAT'S
JUST FINE,
THEN.



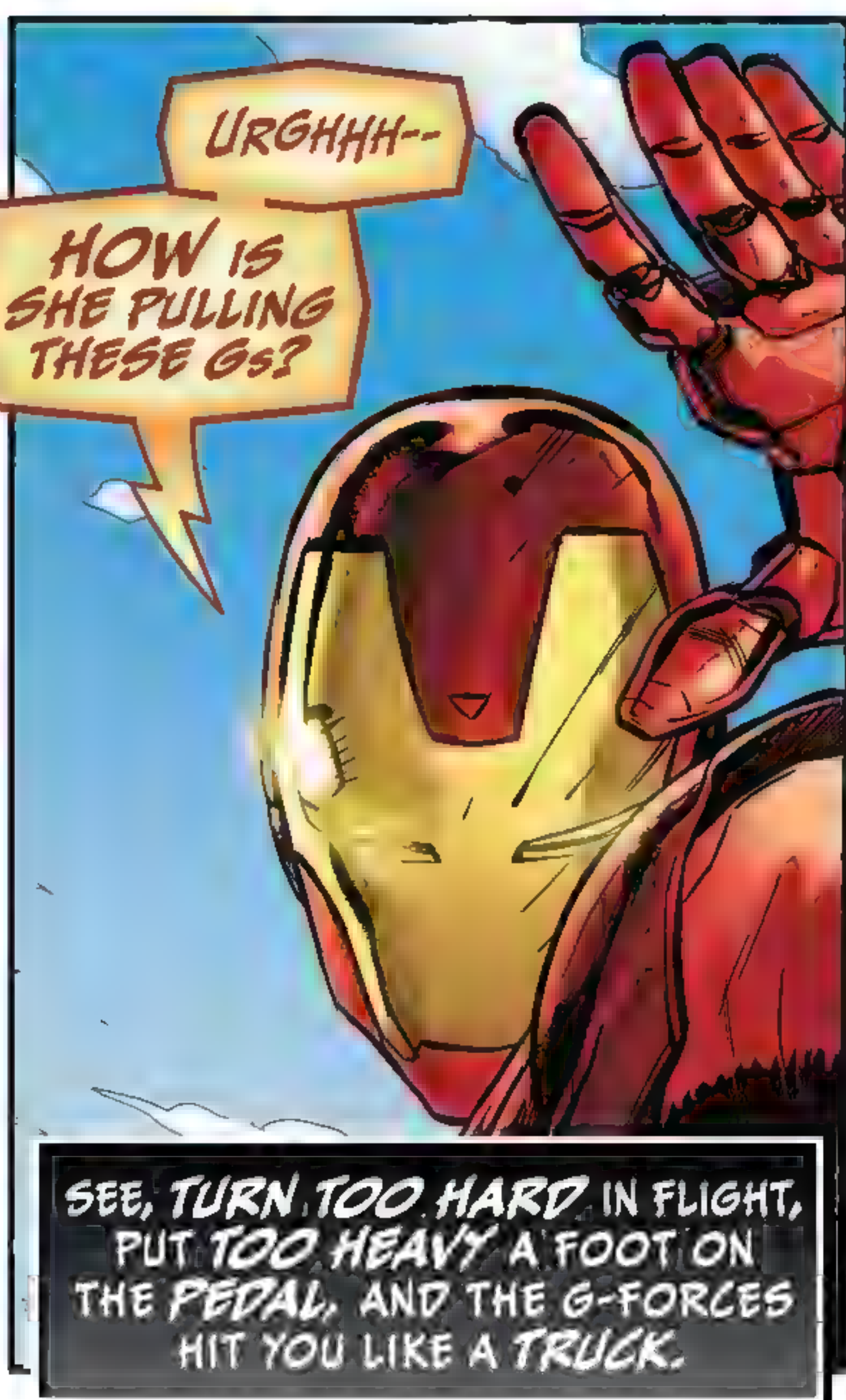
PLUS, MY LITTLE BLACK DRESS HERE HAS A SECRET WEAPON.

I CAN'T FLY LIKE STARK...



...BUT I CAN OUTMANEUVER HIM.

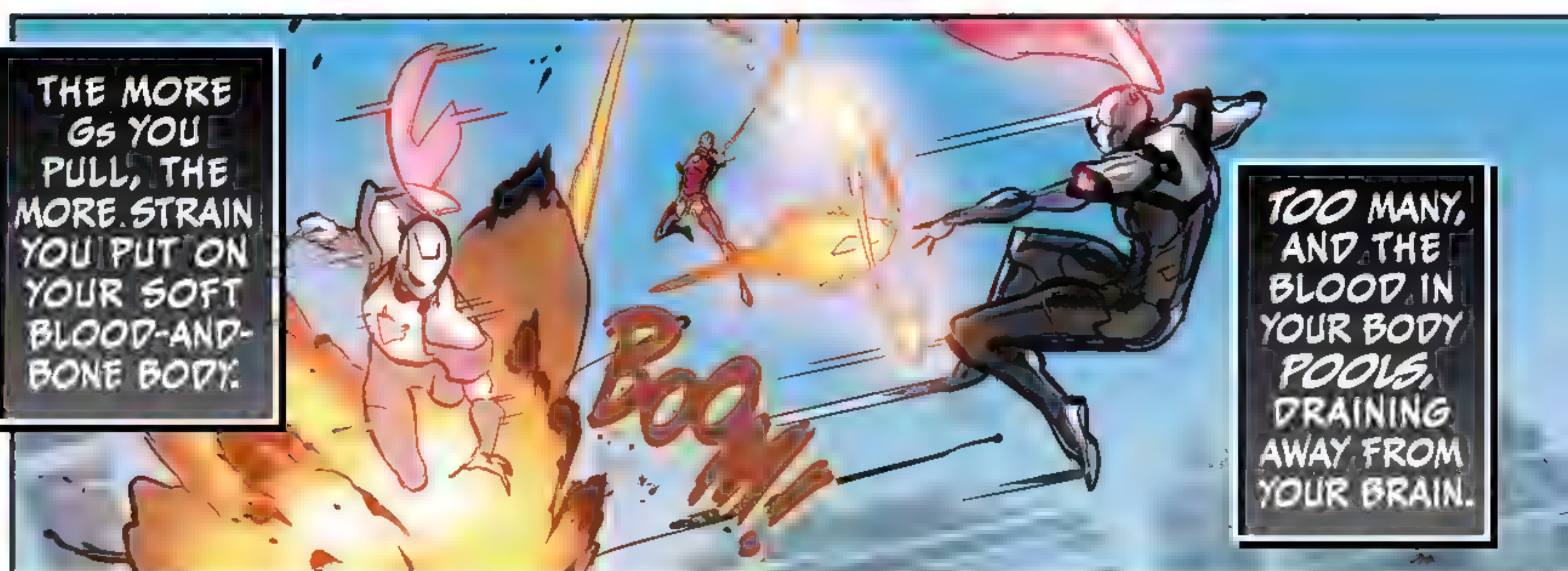
THIS CAT IS NOTHING IF NOT NIMBLE.



URGHHH--

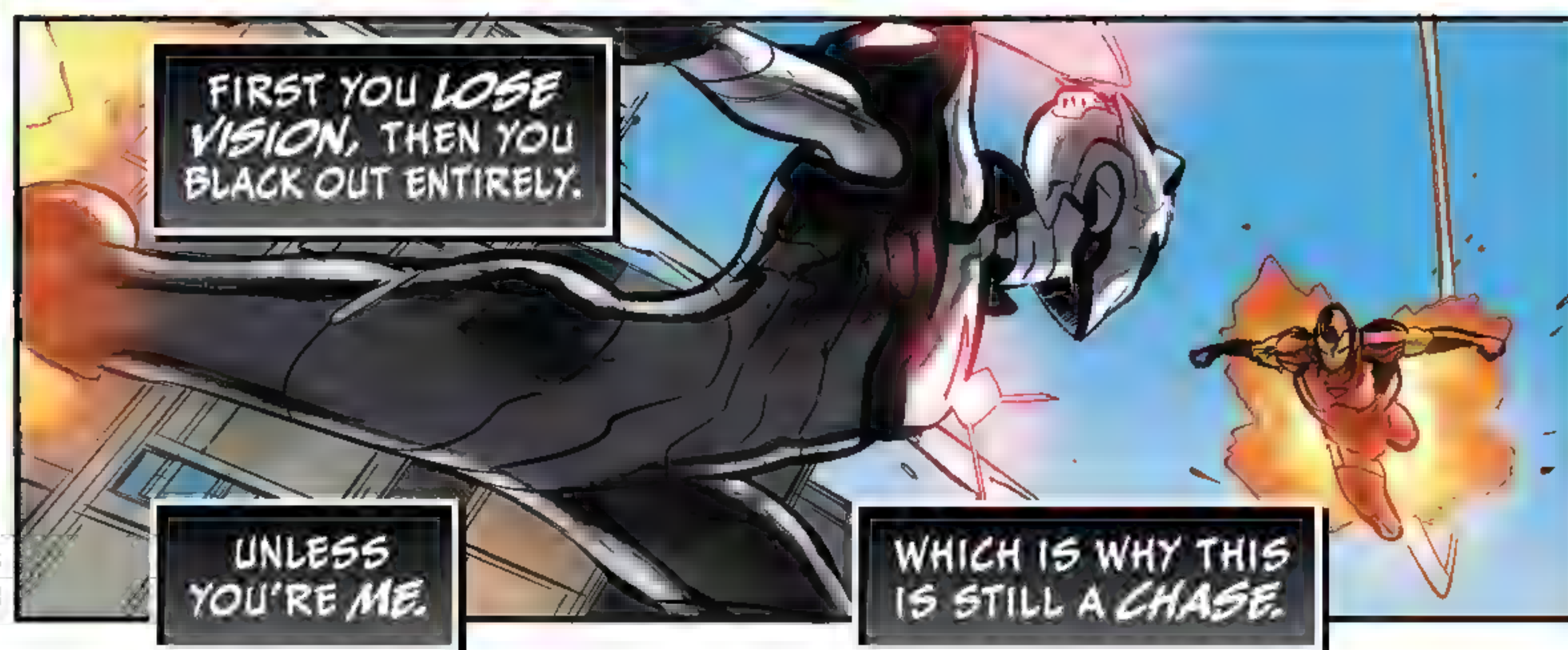
HOW IS SHE PULLING THESE GS?

SEE, TURN TOO HARD IN FLIGHT, PUT TOO HEAVY A FOOT ON THE PEDAL, AND THE G-FORCES HIT YOU LIKE A TRUCK.



THE MORE GS YOU PULL, THE MORE STRAIN YOU PUT ON YOUR SOFT BLOOD-AND-BONE BODY.

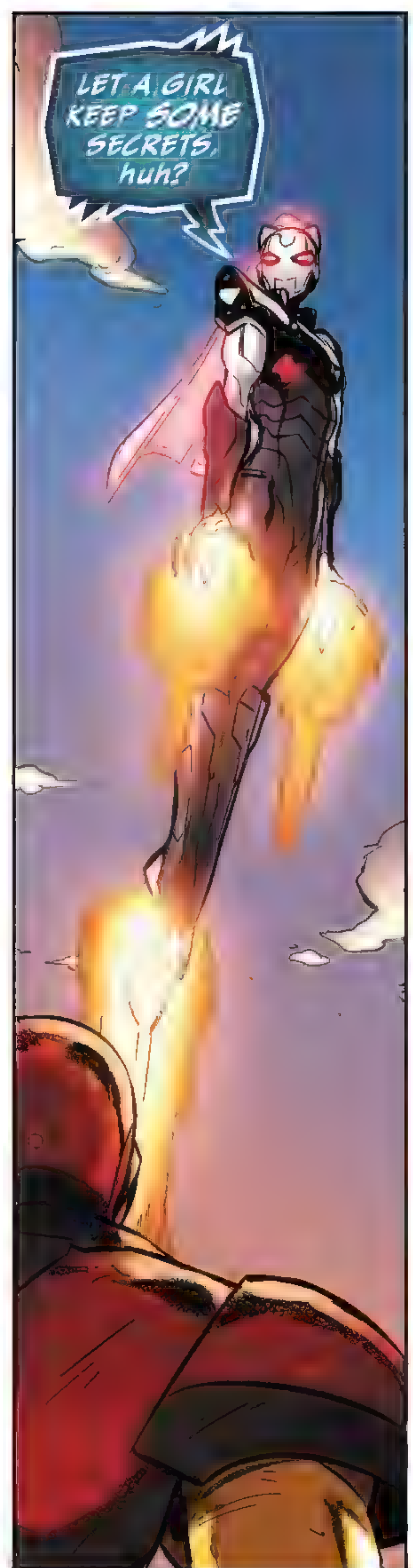
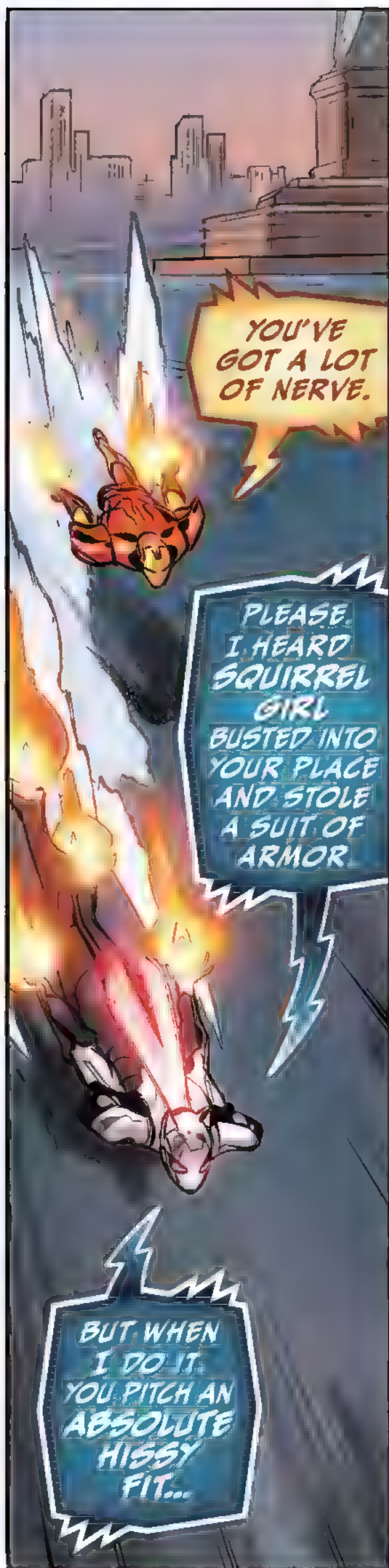
TOO MANY, AND THE BLOOD IN YOUR BODY POOLS, DRAINING AWAY FROM YOUR BRAIN.

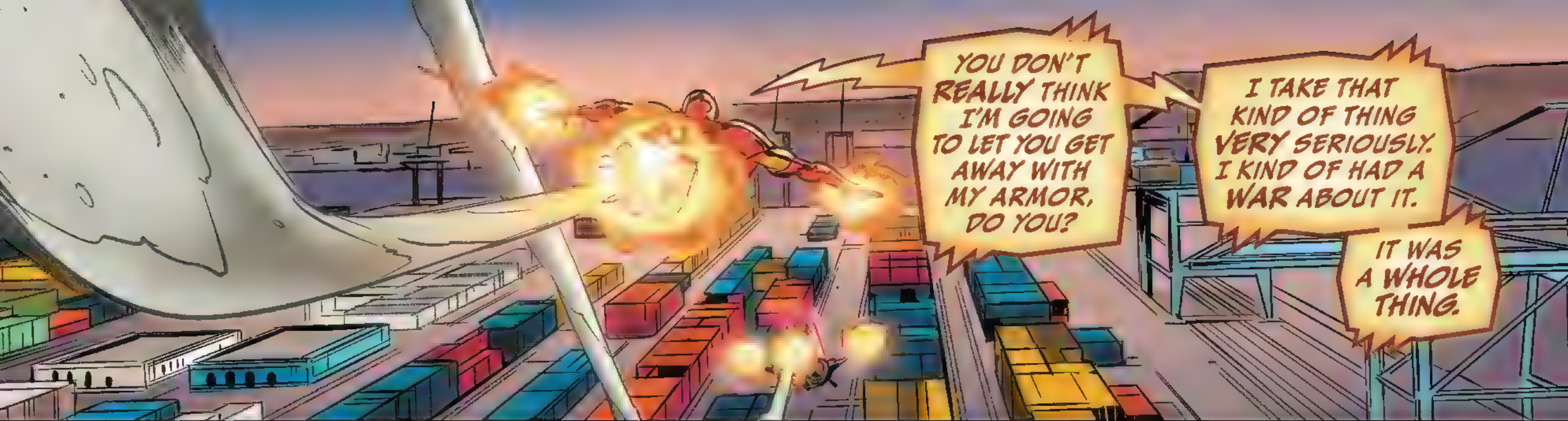


FIRST YOU LOSE VISION, THEN YOU BLACK OUT ENTIRELY.

UNLESS YOU'RE ME.

WHICH IS WHY THIS IS STILL A CHASE.

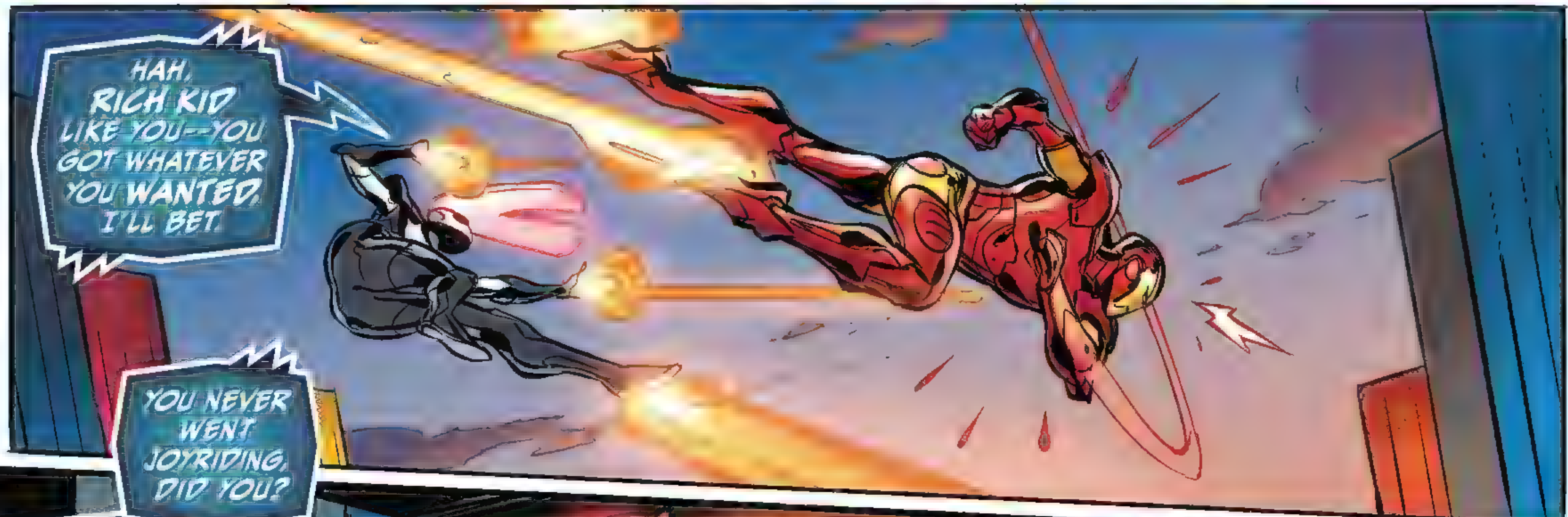




YOU DON'T REALLY THINK I'M GOING TO LET YOU GET AWAY WITH MY ARMOR, DO YOU?

I TAKE THAT KIND OF THING VERY SERIOUSLY. I KIND OF HAD A WAR ABOUT IT.

IT WAS A WHOLE THING.



HAH, RICH KID LIKE YOU--YOU GOT WHATEVER YOU WANTED, I'LL BET.

YOU NEVER WENT JOYRIDING, DID YOU?



DIDN'T HAVE TO PROBABLY GOT A LAMBORGHINI FOR YOUR SWEET SIXTEEN.

A '71 HEMI 'CUDA, ACTUALLY.

POINT IS, YOU DON'T RIP OFF THE CAR BECAUSE YOU WANT TO KEEP IT.

NO...

WHEN YOU GO JOYRIDING, YOU STEAL THE CAR BECAUSE YOU WANT TO DRIVE IT.

FOR THE THRILL. FOR THE HELL OF IT.



NOW, I DON'T KNOW
HOW LONG STARK
TAKES TO BUILD ONE
OF THESE SUITS.

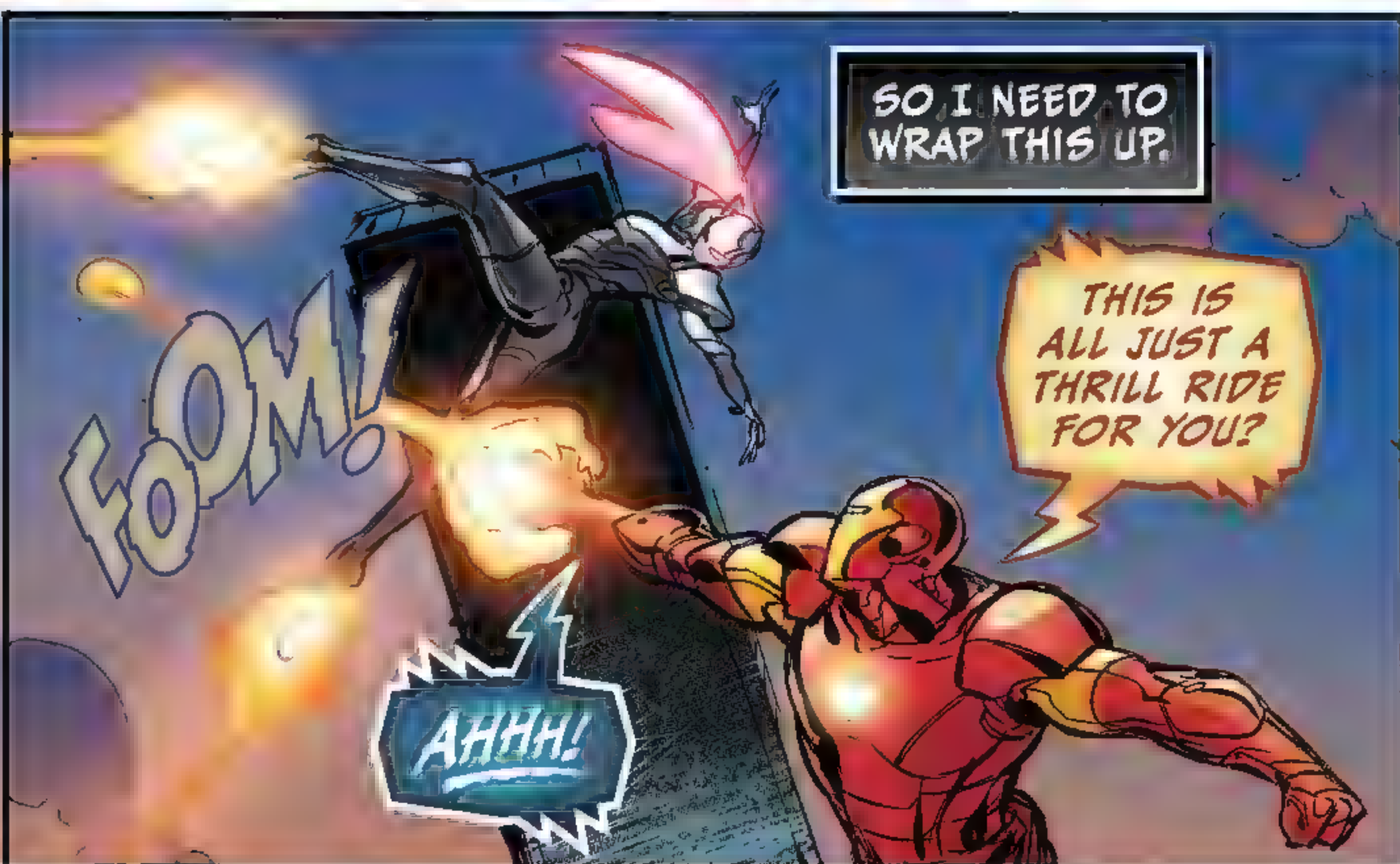
BUT IT SURE ISN'T
A FEW MINUTES.

I PUSHED THE
NANOFORGE TOO
HARD TO PUT
THIS BUCKET OF
BOLTS TOGETHER
QUICKLY.

NO LIFE SUPPORT. NO
MISSILES, REPULSORS--
NOTHING BUT THE CLAWS.

IT'S ALL
SPEED AND
ELECTRONIC
DEFENSE.

AND IT'S
STARTING
TO COME
APART.



SO I NEED TO
WRAP THIS UP.

THIS IS
ALL JUST A
THRILL RIDE
FOR YOU?

AHHH!



YOU RIP OFF
A SPORTS CAR.
YOU WANT TO
OPEN IT UP.

REALLY
SEE WHAT IT
CAN DO.



BUT WHEN YOU
RIP OFF A WAR
MACHINE...

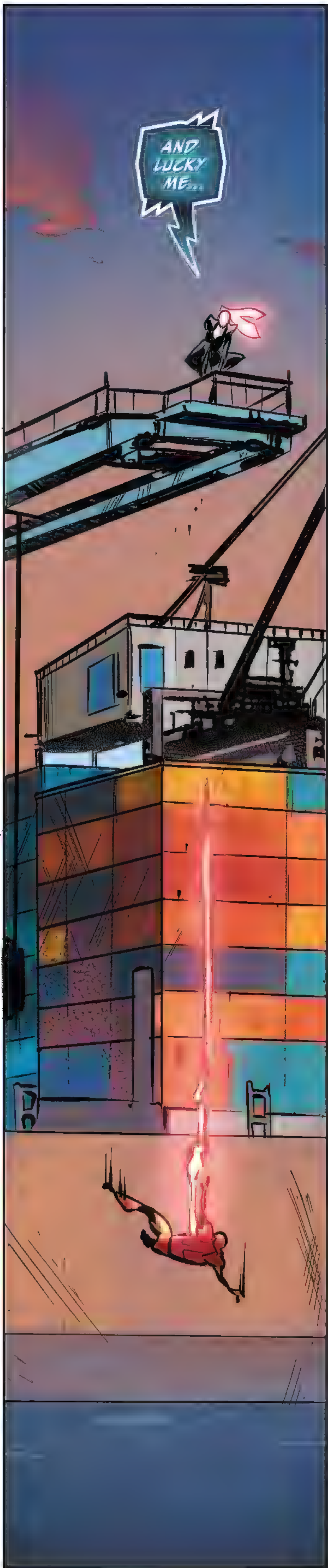
SKRITCH!



YAARGH!

...AND YOU
WANT TO PUT
IT THROUGH
ITS PAGES?

THEN, BABY,
YOU TAKE IT
TO WAR.



"THE UPPER
EAST SIDE."

THE UPPER EAST SIDE

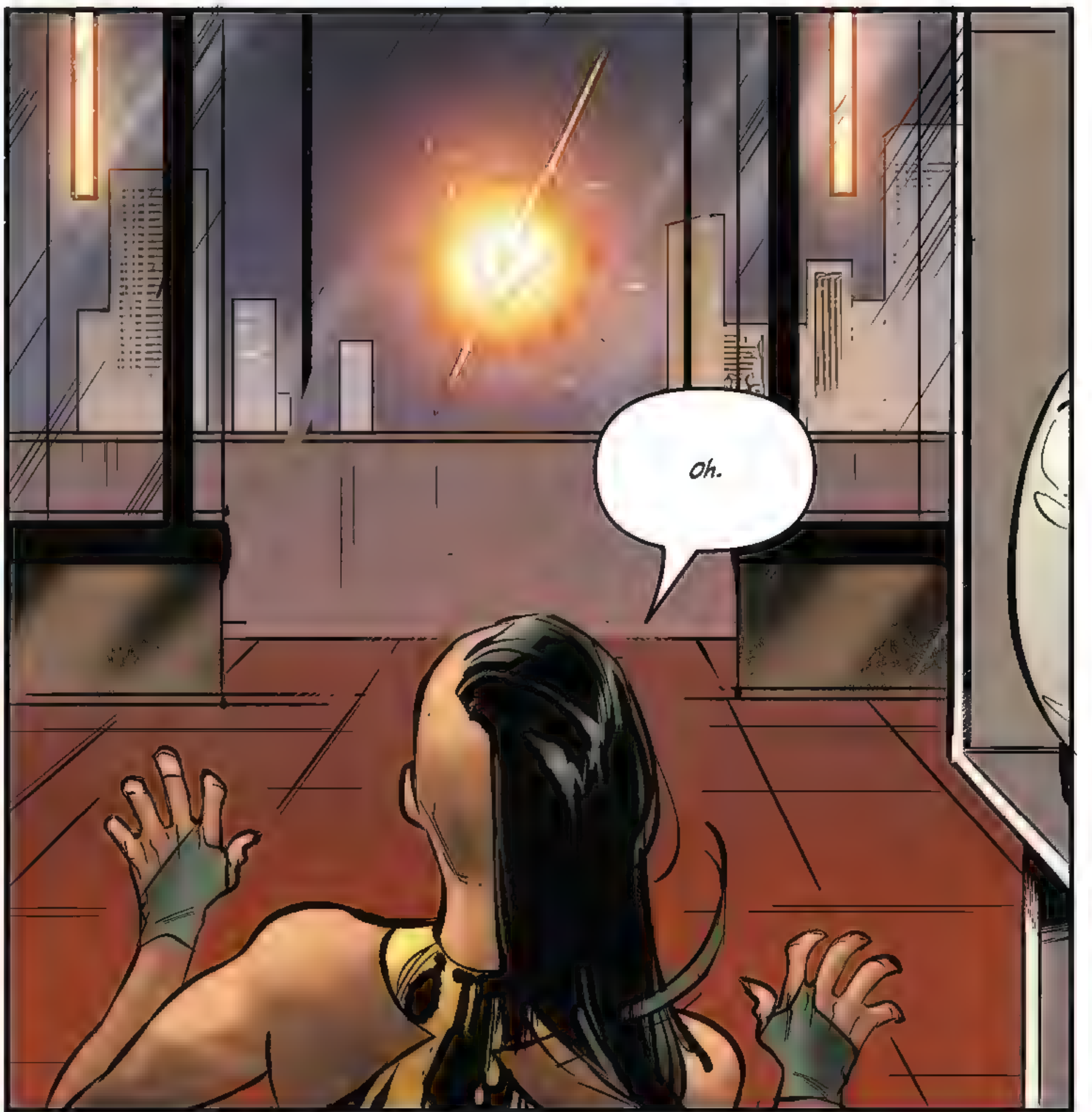


RATTLE RATTLE RATTLE RATTLE

WHAT--



Oh.



USUALLY, I TRY
TO GO FOR THE
SMART MOVE.

THERE'S
NO PROFIT
IN REVENGE.

BUT I'M SICK OF
ODESSA PUSHING
ME AROUND.

AND SOMETIMES...

POW!!!

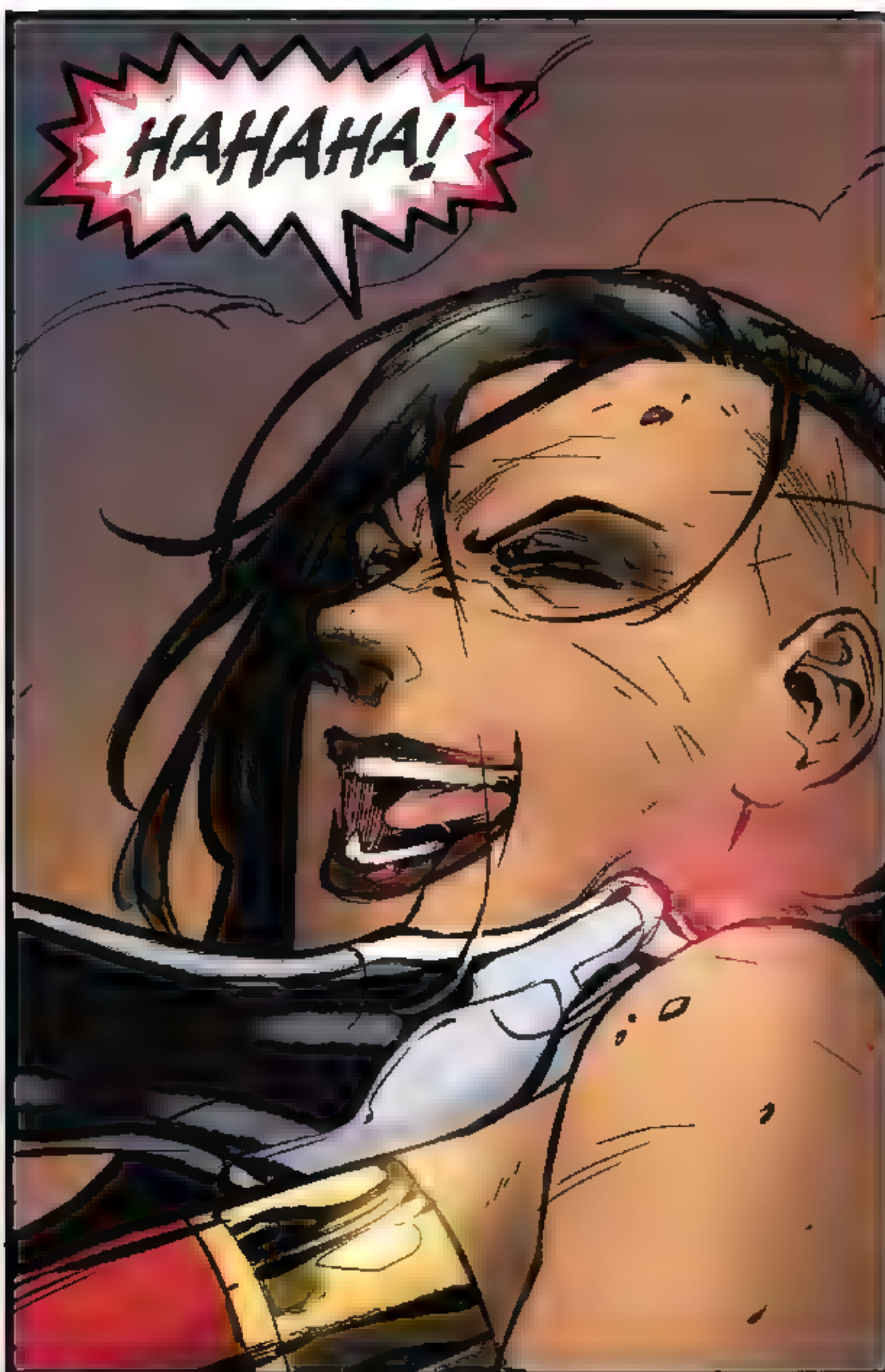
...SOMETIMES
REVENGE IS ITS
OWN PROFIT.



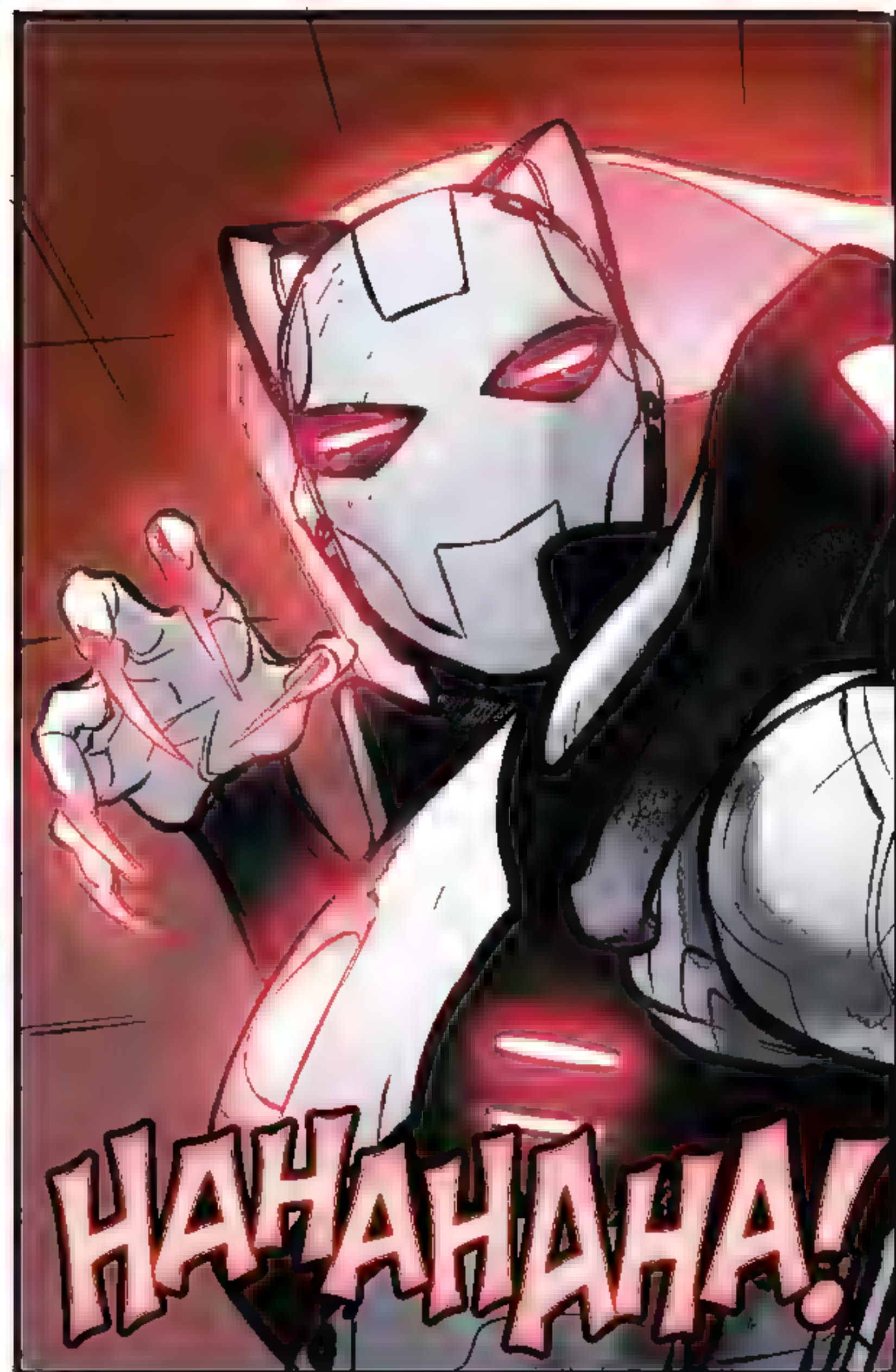




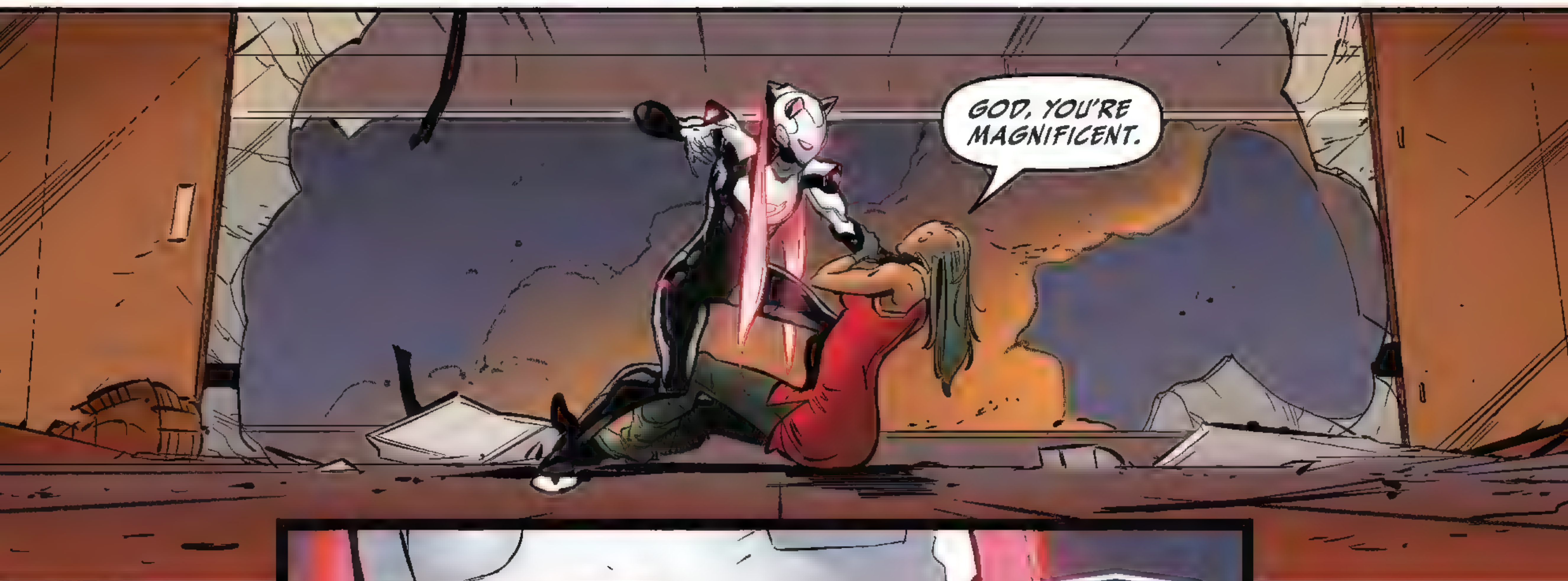
Hah-- Hah-- Hah--



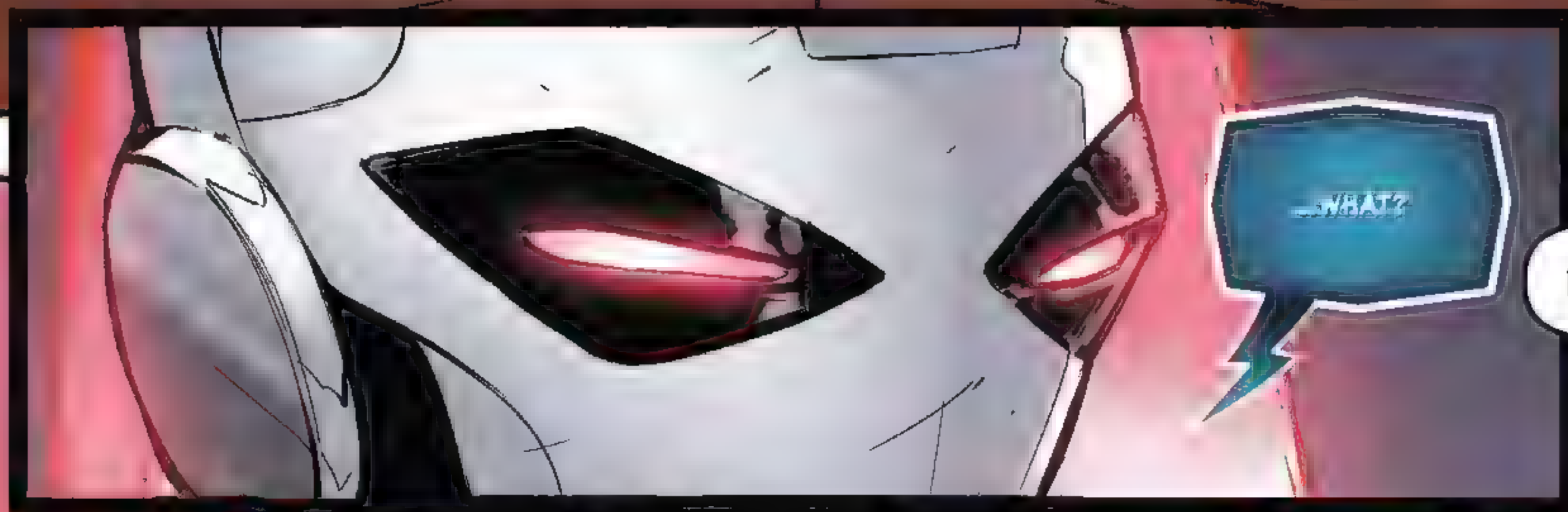
HAHAHA!



HAHAHAHA!



GOD, YOU'RE
MAGNIFICENT.



...WHAT?

NO ONE.

NO ONE IN
THIS WORLD
WOULD DO
THIS. WOULD
EVEN THINK
OF IT.

STEAL
AN IRON
MAN
SUIT.

ATTACK
ME IN MY
HOME.

MEET ME
BLOW FOR
BLOW.





I DON'T THINK YOU UNDERSTAND THE GRAVITY OF YOUR SITUATION.

=Gurk=

I--I UNDERSTAND IT PERFECTLY.



YOU ARE WHAT I NEED.

YOU ARE WHAT THIS GUILD NEEDS.

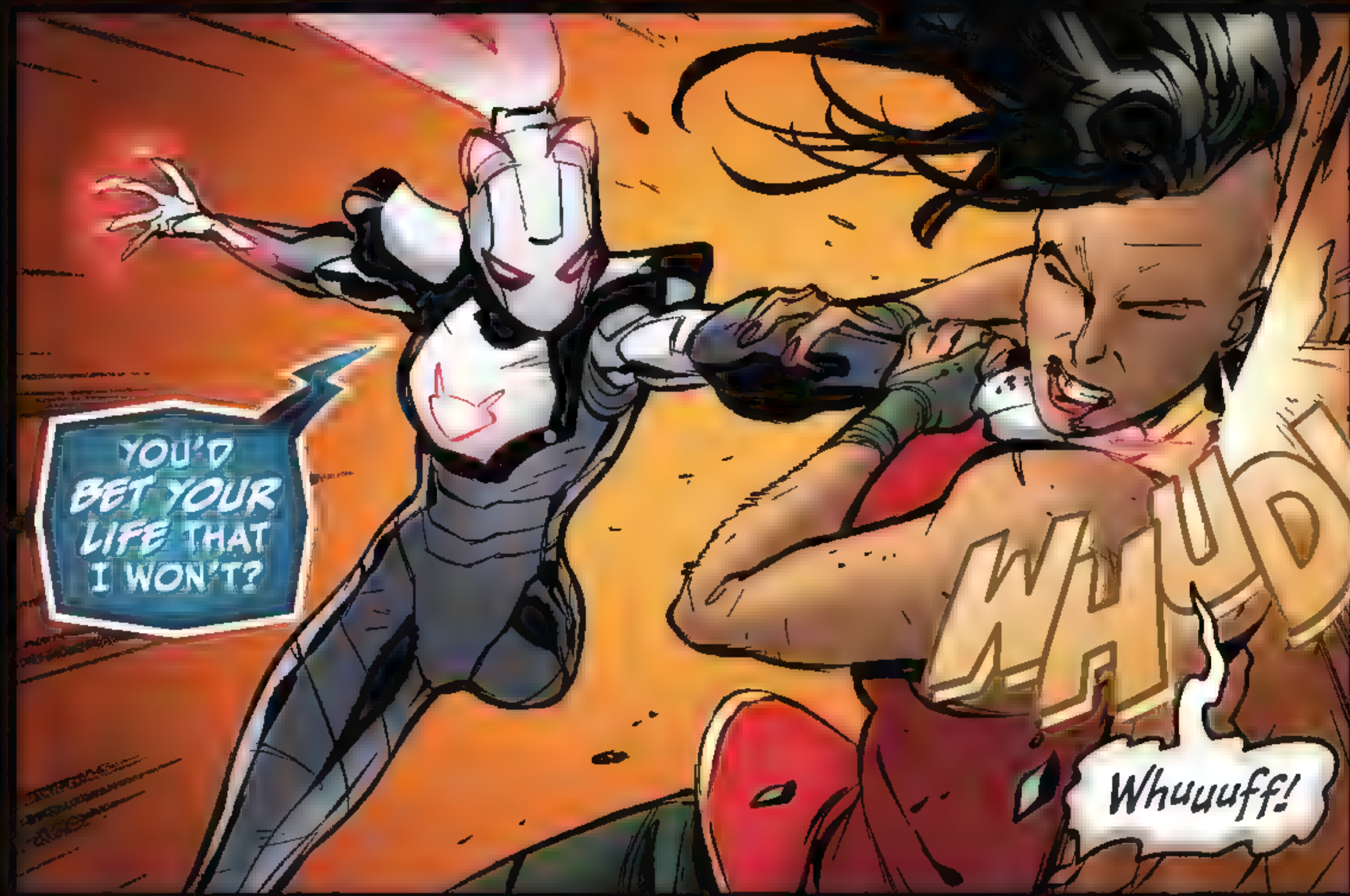
YOU ARE A THIEF OF SUPREME SKILL, OF IMPECCABLE LINEAGE, OF OBNOXIOUS INDIVIDUALISM.

YOU BELONG WITH US.

YOU CAN'T FRIGHTEN ME, FELICIA.

AND I WILL HAVE YOU.

SO YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO KILL ME.



YOU'D BET YOUR LIFE THAT I WON'T?

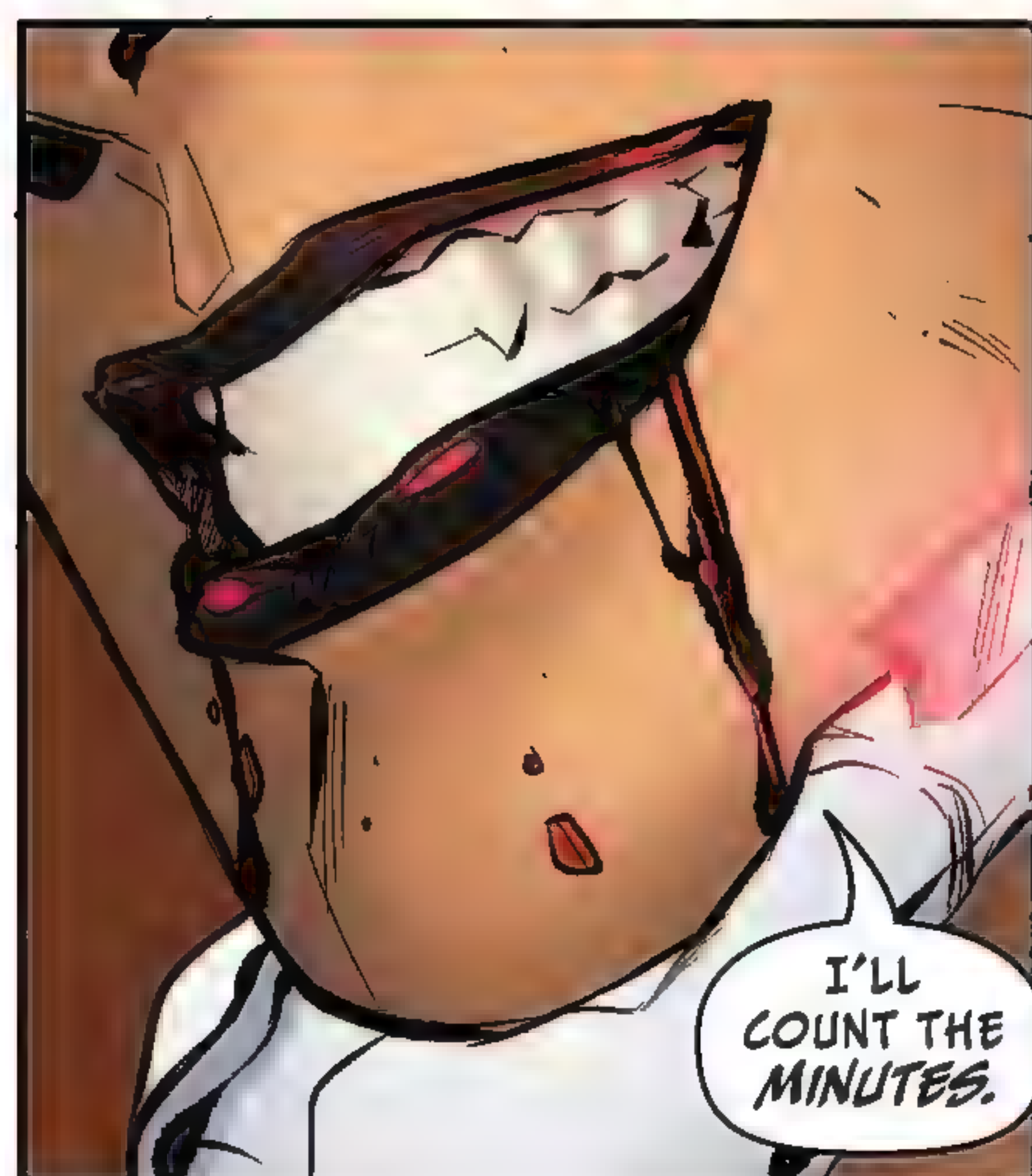
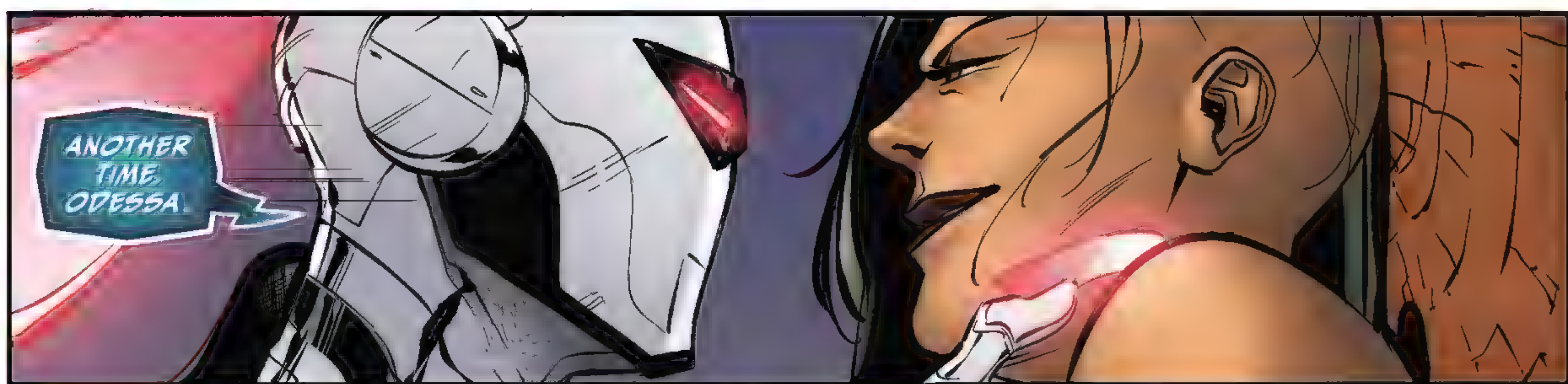
Whuuuff!

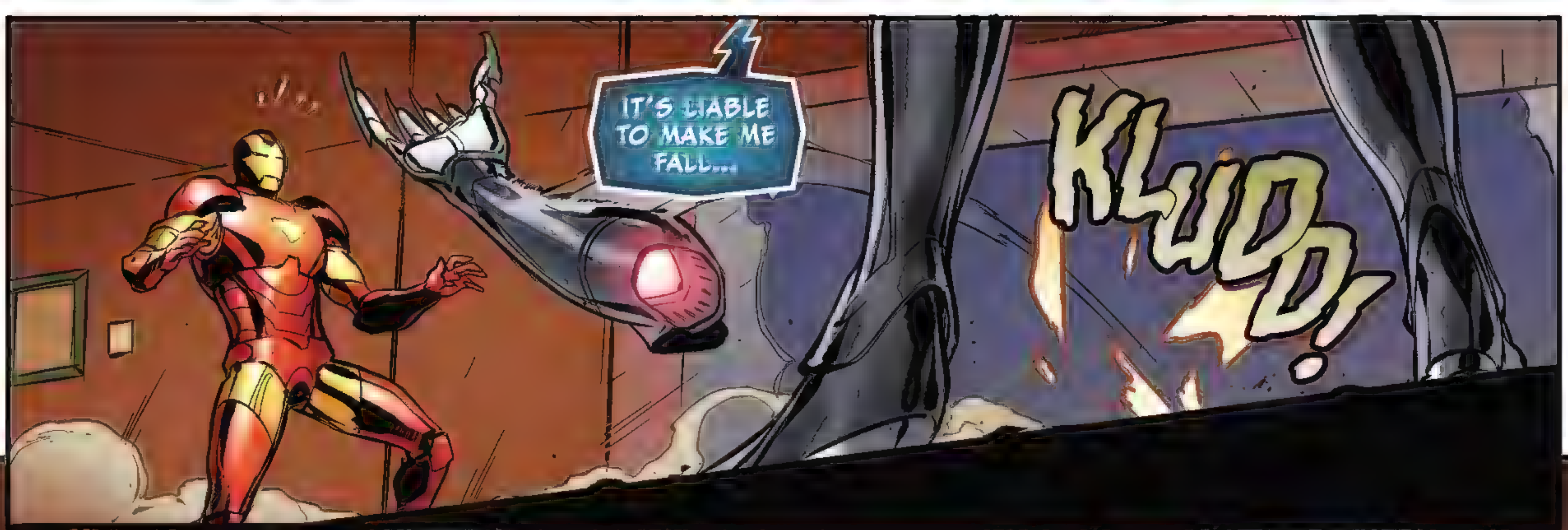


YOU DON'T HAVE IT IN YOU. THE RUTHLESSNESS.

WE'LL HAVE TO WORK ON THAT.

LAST WARNING. LET HER GO AND POWER DOWN.





IT'S LIABE
TO MAKE ME
FALL...

KLUD!



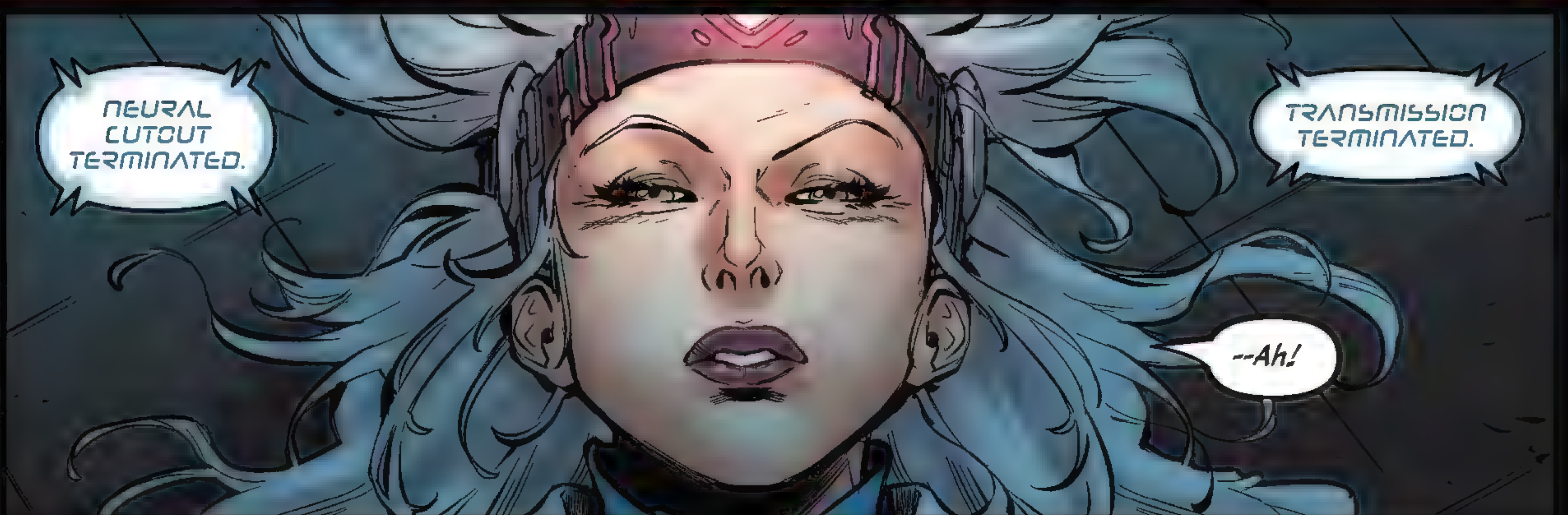
...TO
PIECES.

SHE WAS
NEVER IN THE
ARMOR.

SHE WAS
NEVER IN THE
ARMOR--

KLANK!

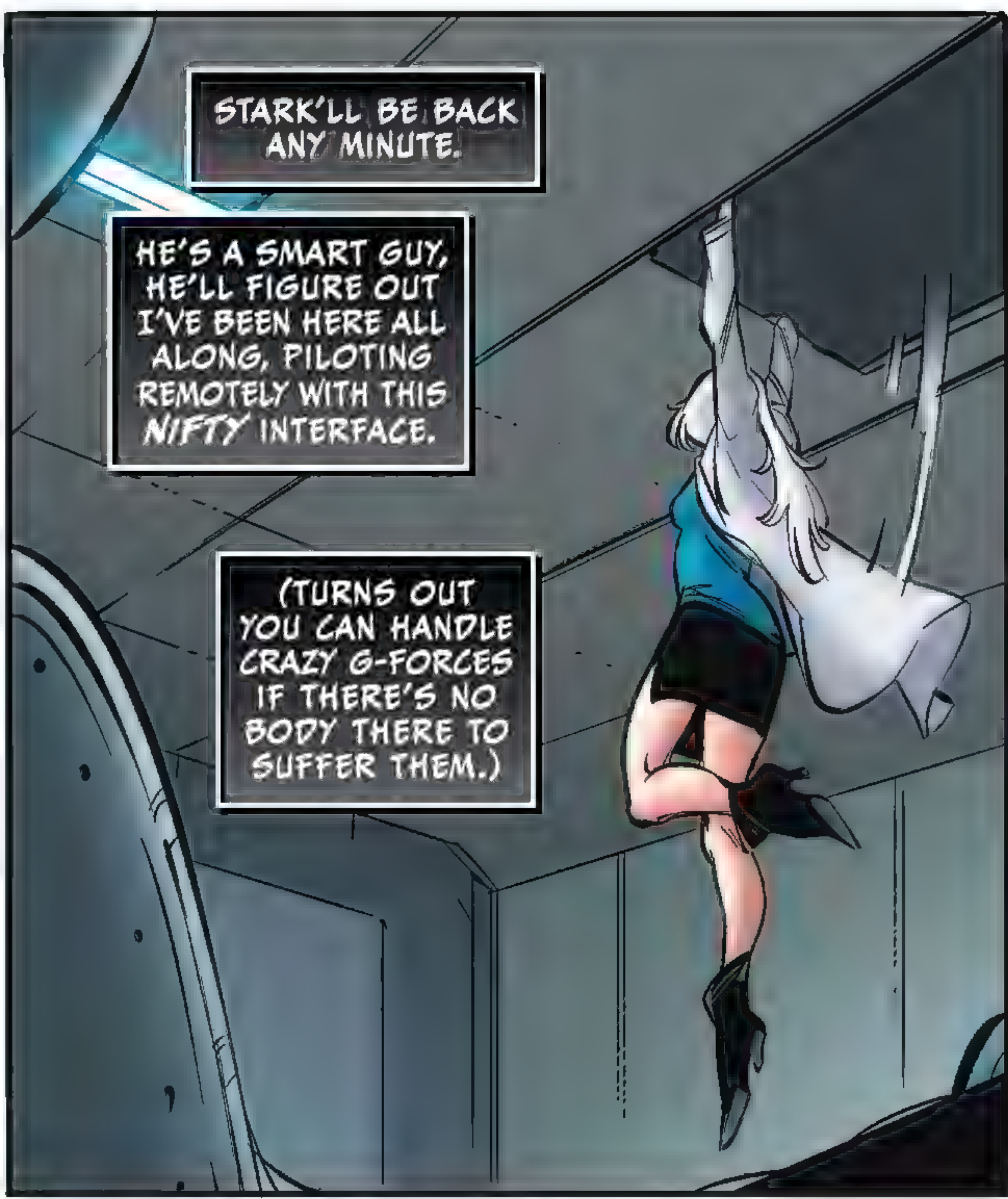
CLATTER!



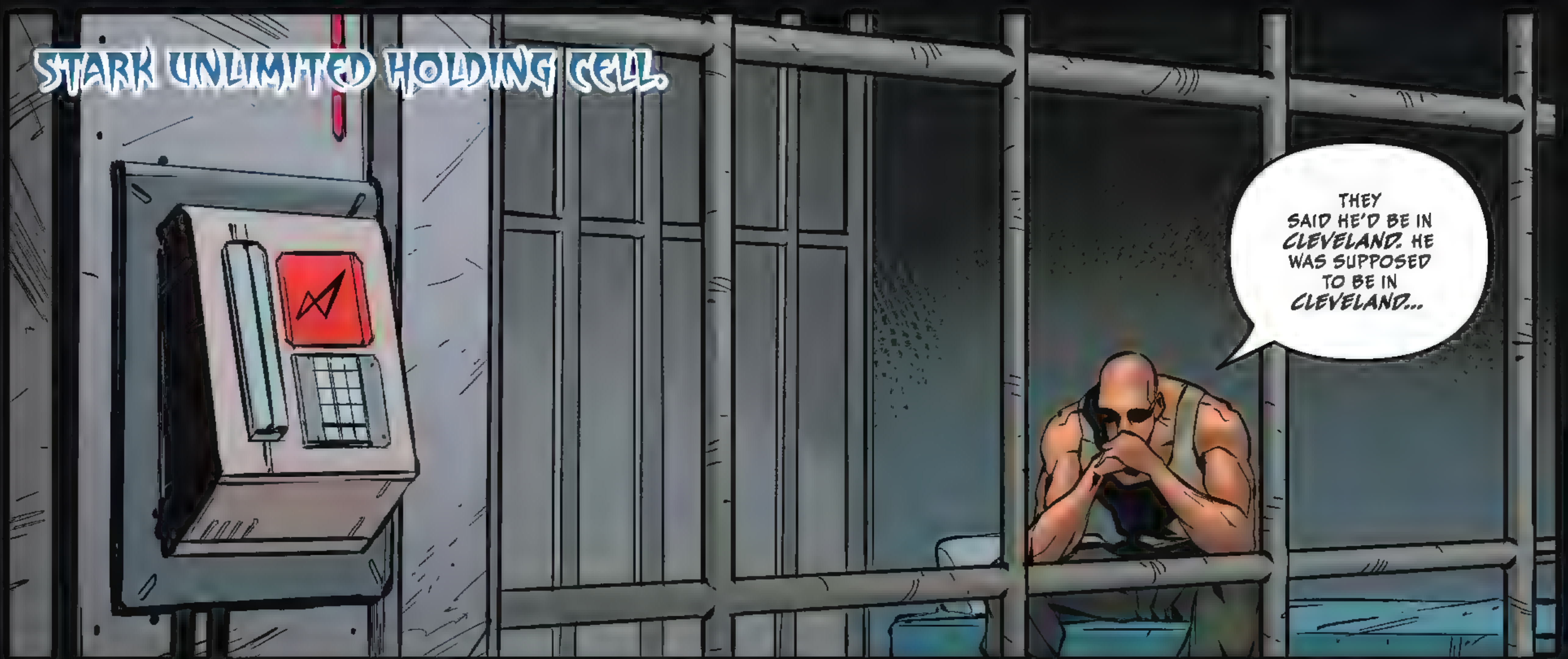
NEURAL
CUTOUT
TERMINATED.

TRANSMISSION
TERMINATED.

--Ah!



STARK UNLIMITED HOLDING CELL.



THEY SAID HE'D BE IN CLEVELAND. HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE IN CLEVELAND...



HEY, TAGGERT.
FIREPOWER.
Huh?



SHAKE A LEG, BABY.
WE'RE LEAVING.

CERES' HIDEOUT:
PARAMUS, NEW JERSEY.

NOTHING LIKE GETTING
BACK TO MY OLD STOMPING
GROUNDS AFTER THAT THING IN
MADRIPOOR, AND THEN THAT
KOREAN NIGHTMARE.*

...AND YOU SHOULD HAVE
SEEN HER FACE WHEN
I BUSTED THROUGH
THAT WINDOW...

POW!

*LOOK OUT FOR BLACK CAT ANNUAL #2!

MASTERFUL,
DARLING.
MASTERFUL.

YOU'VE
MADE AN OLD
MAN VERY
PROUD.

I JUST WISH
YOU HAD BROUGHT
THAT *SUIT* BACK.

THE *TERROR* WE
COULD INSPIRE WITH
SUCH A WEAPON...

I DUNNO,
BOSS... ARE
YOU SURE THAT
WAS SUCH A
GOOD IDEA?

TAKING A POKE
AT ODESSA
LIKE THAT, WHEN
WE'RE ALMOST
READY TO RIP
HER OFF?

I MEAN,
MAYBE
NOT.

I DIDN'T
EXPECT HER
TO BE SO...
INTENSE.

BUT...

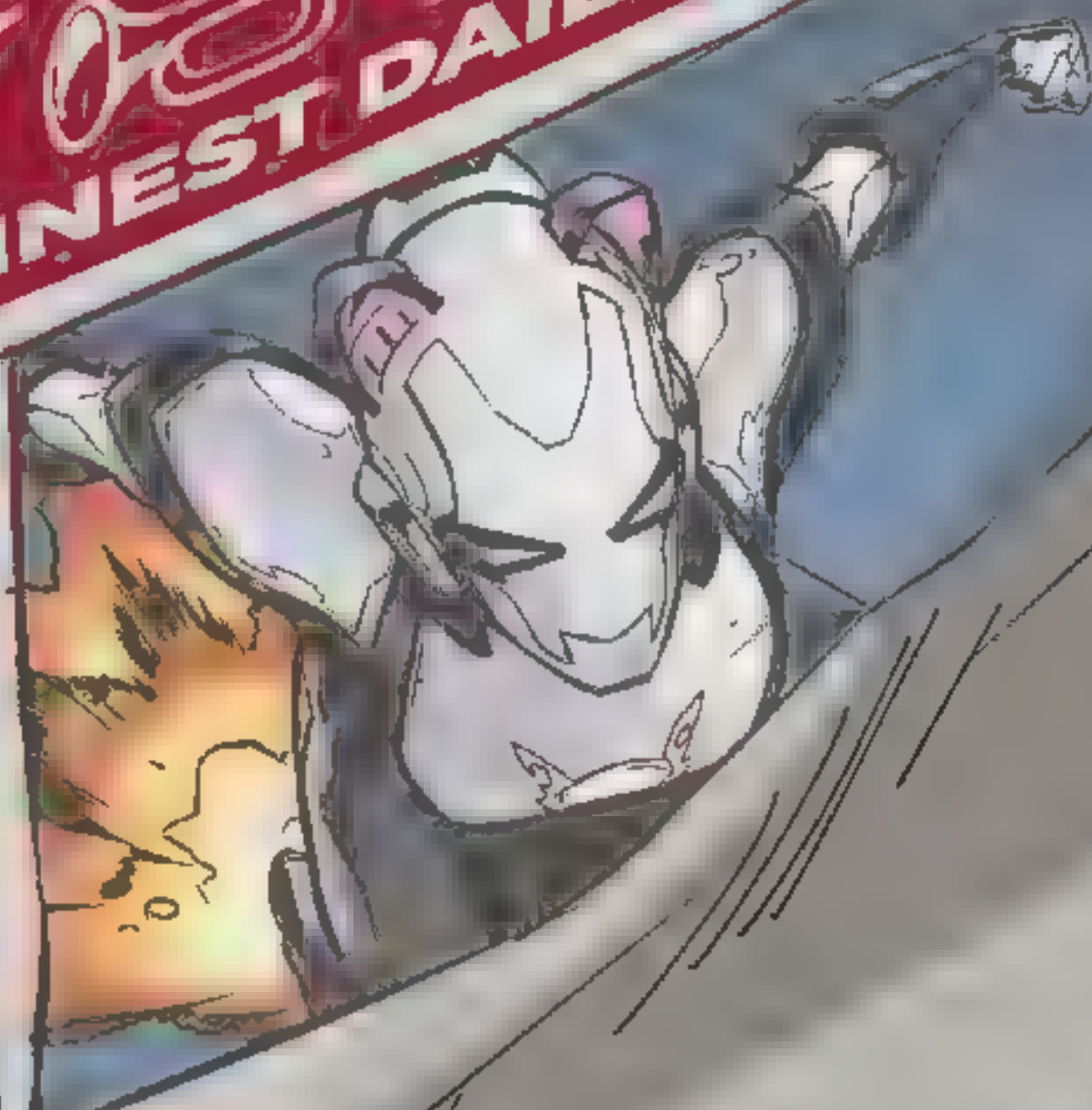
"...WITH US
SO CLOSE
TO WINNING..."

Hmm...

"--WHAT COULD
GO WRONG?"

...THIS
WON'T DO
AT ALL.

DAILY BUGLE
NEW YORK'S FINEST DAILY NEWSPAPER
**BLACK
CAT:
THREAT
AND
MENACE?!**





BLACK CAT ANNUAL (2019) 1

NOTE: This story takes place before *Black Cat* (2019) #1



NOPE.
NO WAY.

Oh
COME ON.
LIVE A LITTLE,
SPIDER.

SEE,
YOU SAY THAT,
AND WHEN I LISTEN,
I ALWAYS END UP
AROUND PEOPLE WHO
WANT ME TO LIVE
A LOT LESS.



PLEASE?
FOR ME?

NOPE.

HARD
PASS.



WHAT DO
YOU NEED ME
FOR? GET ONE OF
YOUR CRIMINAL
PALS!

WHAT
DO I NEED
YOU FOR?



I NEED YOU
FOR THIS BECAUSE
I TRUST YOU.

BECAUSE YOU
CAN HANDLE
YOURSELF.

BECAUSE,
ULTIMATELY, YOU
WANT TO HELP
PEOPLE.

BECAUSE...
THAT IS YOUR
THING, ISN'T
IT? HELPING
PEOPLE?



= Sigh... =

I COULDN'T
BE AN ALOOF
NEIGHBORHOOD
SPIDER-MAN,
NOOOOO.

A HAUGHTY,
DETACHED
NEIGHBORHOOD
SPIDER-MAN.

I
SHOULD
BE SO
LUCKY.



AND IT'S NOT
BECAUSE I'M THE
ONLY PERSON YOU
KNOW WHO THAT
TUX WILL FIT?

THE BLACK CAT

NO...?

ALRIGHT.

ALRIGHT,
ALRIGHT,
ALRIGHT,
FINE.

with

SPIDER-MAN

in

HE SAID
YES!

LET'S GET MARRIED!



ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH, NORTHPORT, NY.

IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND
WHAT COMES NEXT, YOU
NEED TO KNOW THIS:

THE MAGGIA
ARE WEIRD.

"BUT FELICIA," YOU
SAY, "THEY'RE JUST YOUR
RUN-OF-THE-MILL GANGSTERS
WITH ESOTERIC TRADITIONS
AND A FIXATION ON DEATH
RAYS AND ROBOTS!"

"HOW IS
THAT
WEIRD?"

PART 18 THE WEDDING OF THE MARTYRS



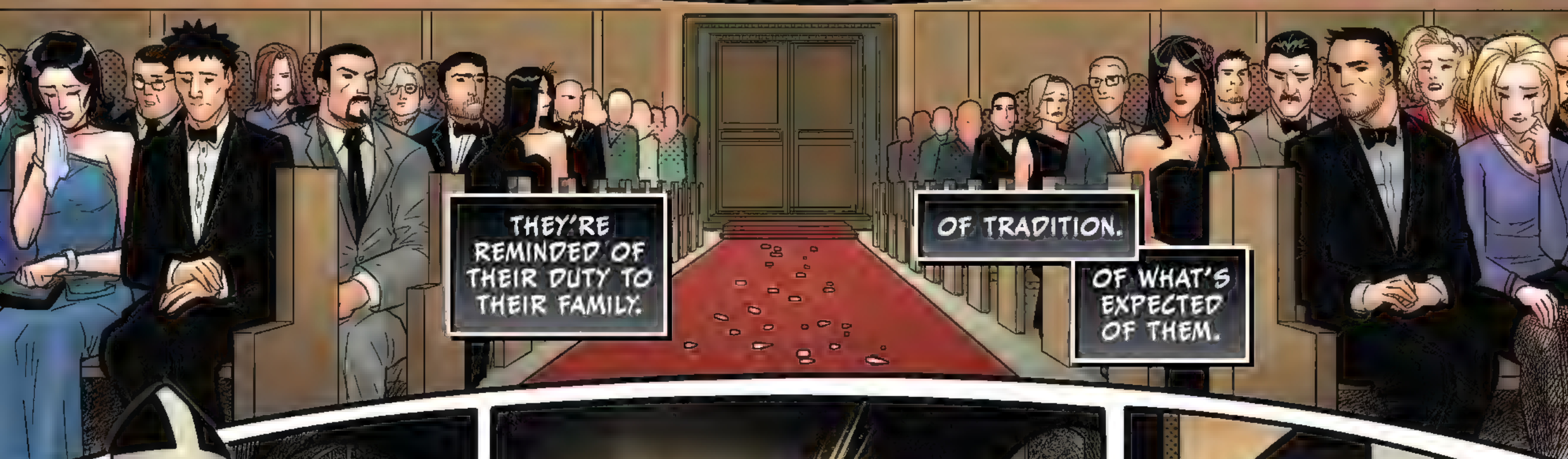
THEY'RE WED,
IN ANCIENT MAGGIA
TRADITION, BOUND
TOGETHER BY
OATH AND LAW.



THEY'RE
REMINDING OF
THEIR DUTY TO
THEIR FAMILY.

OF TRADITION.

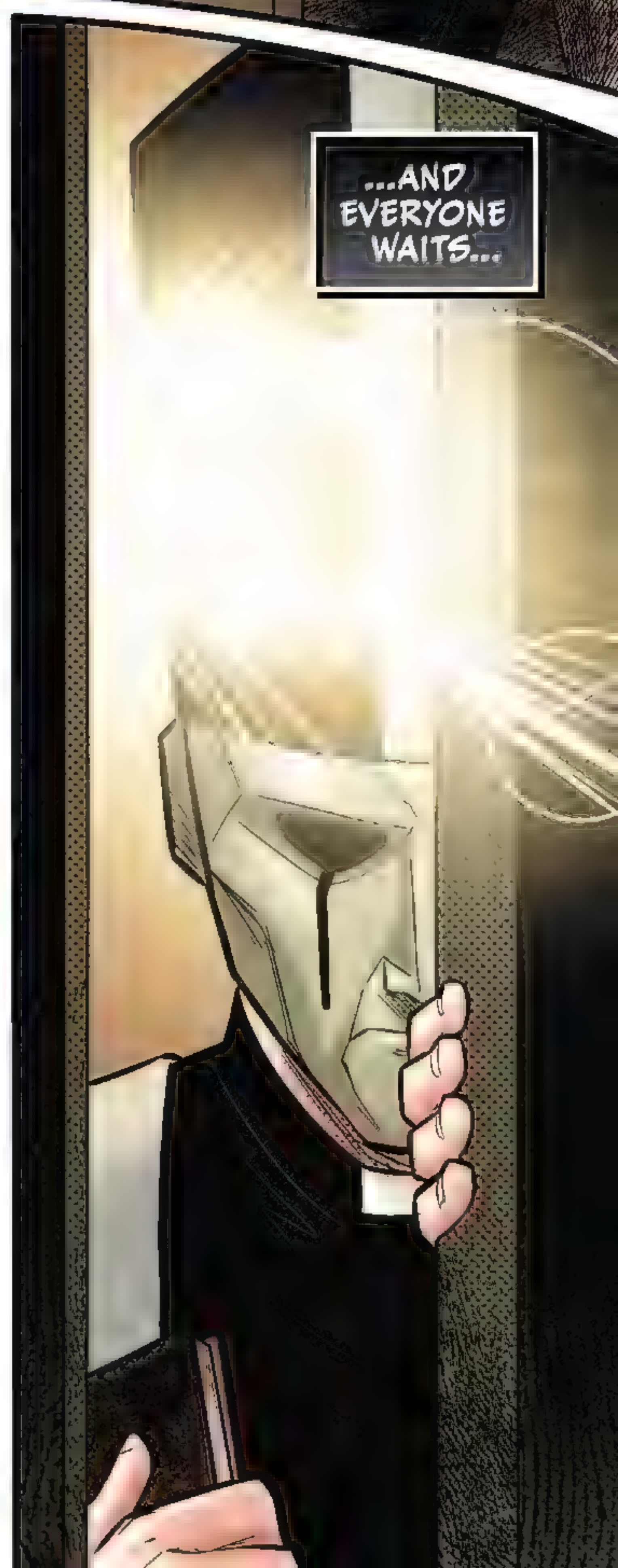
OF WHAT'S
EXPECTED
OF THEM.



AND THEN THE
PRIEST OPENS
THE DOOR THAT
ONLY HE CAN...

...USHERS
THE MARTYRS
THROUGH...

...AND
EVERYONE
WAITS...



...WHILE
THE NEWLYWEDS
FIGHT TO THE
DEATH TO SETTLE
THEIR FAMILIES'
DIFFERENCES.

SEE?

I TOLD
YOU IT'D GO
OFF WITHOUT
A HITCH.

OTHER THAN,
YOU KNOW,
US GETTING
HITCHED.

ONE
HITCH.

WE ARE
LOCKED IN A ROOM
WHERE THE *ONLY*
EXIT IS THROUGH TWO
ENTIRE MAGGIA
FAMILIES.

THAT'S
A LOT OF
DEATH RAYS
BETWEEN US
AND THE
STREET.

RELAX,
BABY.

DON'T
I ALWAYS
HAVE A
PLAN?

⇒ Sigh... ⇒

I MAY
NEVER
LIKE
THEM...

...BUT
YOU ALWAYS
DO HAVE
A PLAN.

MIDTOWN.

I'VE NEVER BEEN GIVEN A THING IN MY LIFE.

THAT IS NOT A COMPLAINT; ONLY LESSER MEN COMPLAIN ABOUT WHAT THEY HAVE AND HAVE NOT BEEN GIVEN.

RIGHT THIS WAY, MR.... COFFIN?

INDEED IT IS, CHRISTOPHER P. COFFIN, AT YOUR SERVICE.

PART 28
THE
SCIENTIFIC
METHOD

INSTEAD, IT IS A POINT OF PRIDE.

WHAT I AM, I HAVE MADE OF MYSELF.

WOULD YOU LIKE ANY ASSISTANCE, MR. COFFIN?

I'D BE HAPPY TO HELP IN ANY WAY I CAN.

YOUNG LADY, YOU ARE INDEED A DELIGHT. A RAY OF SUNSHINE, IF YOU WILL.

MY SKILLS, MY KNOWLEDGE, MY REPUTATION FOR TERRIFYING APPLICATIONS OF THE SCIENCES...

ALL HARD-EARNED. I AM BOTH PYGMALION AND GALATEA, SCULPTOR AND CREATION.

WELL, IF YOU NEED ANYTHING, JUST CALL OUT!

INDEED, YOUNG LADY. INDEED I WILL.

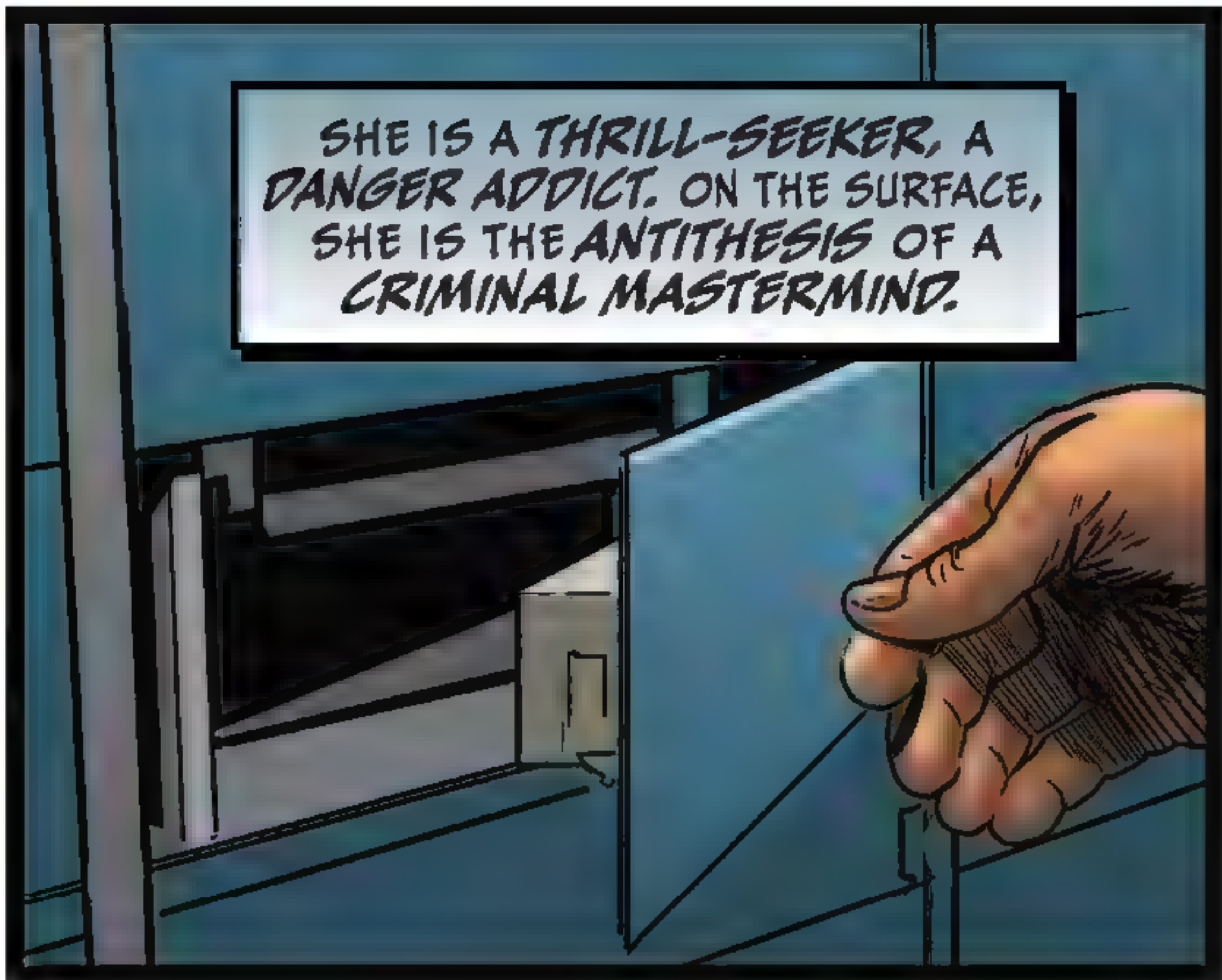
BOTH FRANKENSTEIN AND MONSTER.

I HAVE NO TRUCK WITH "LUCK" OR "FORTUNE."

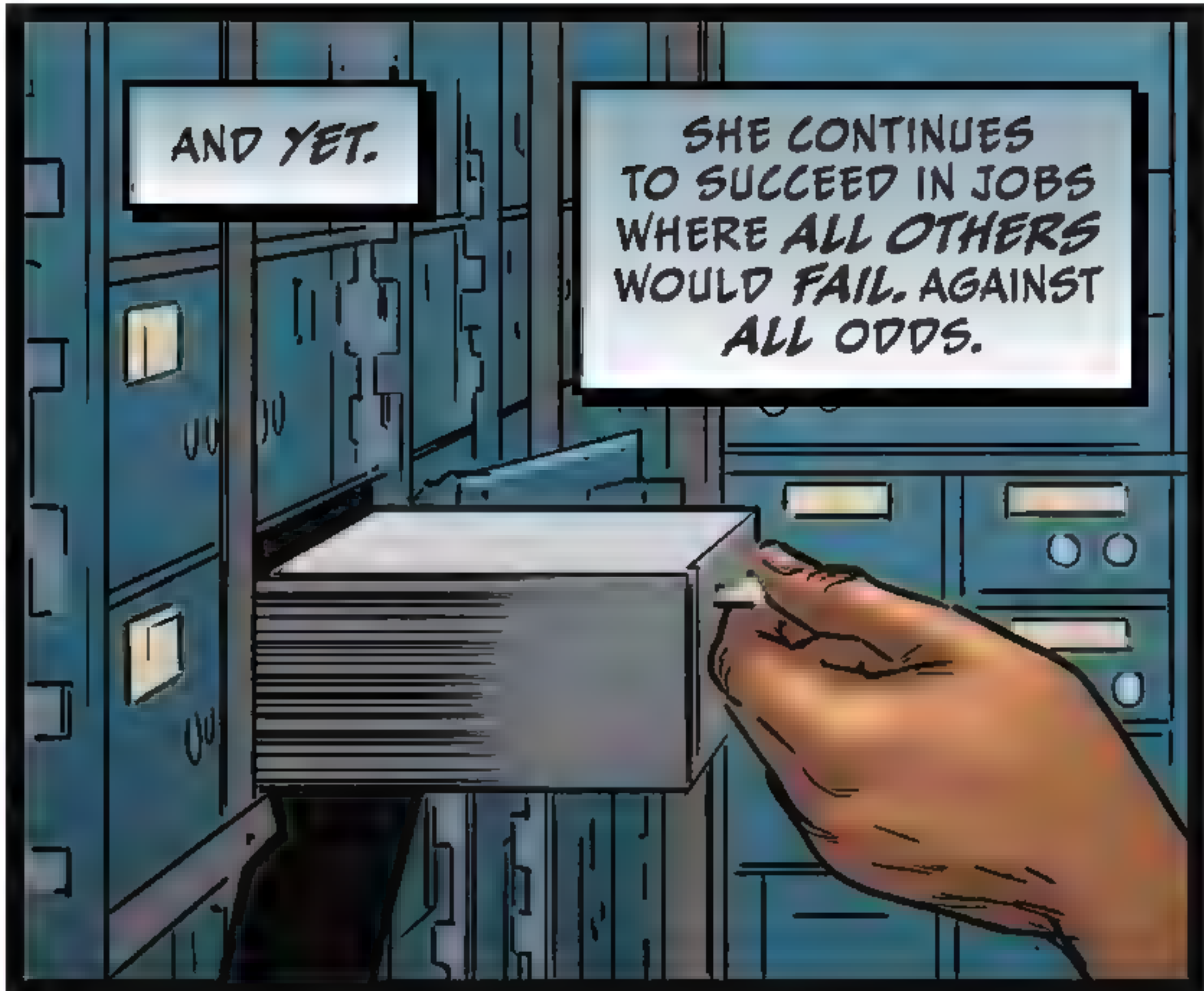
THUD!



WHICH IS WHY
FELICIA HARDY'S
CONTINUED SUCCESS
IS SO UTTERLY
BAFFLING.



SHE IS A **THRILL-SEEKER**, A
DANGER ADDICT. ON THE SURFACE,
SHE IS THE **ANTITHESIS** OF A
CRIMINAL MASTERMIND.



AND **YET**.

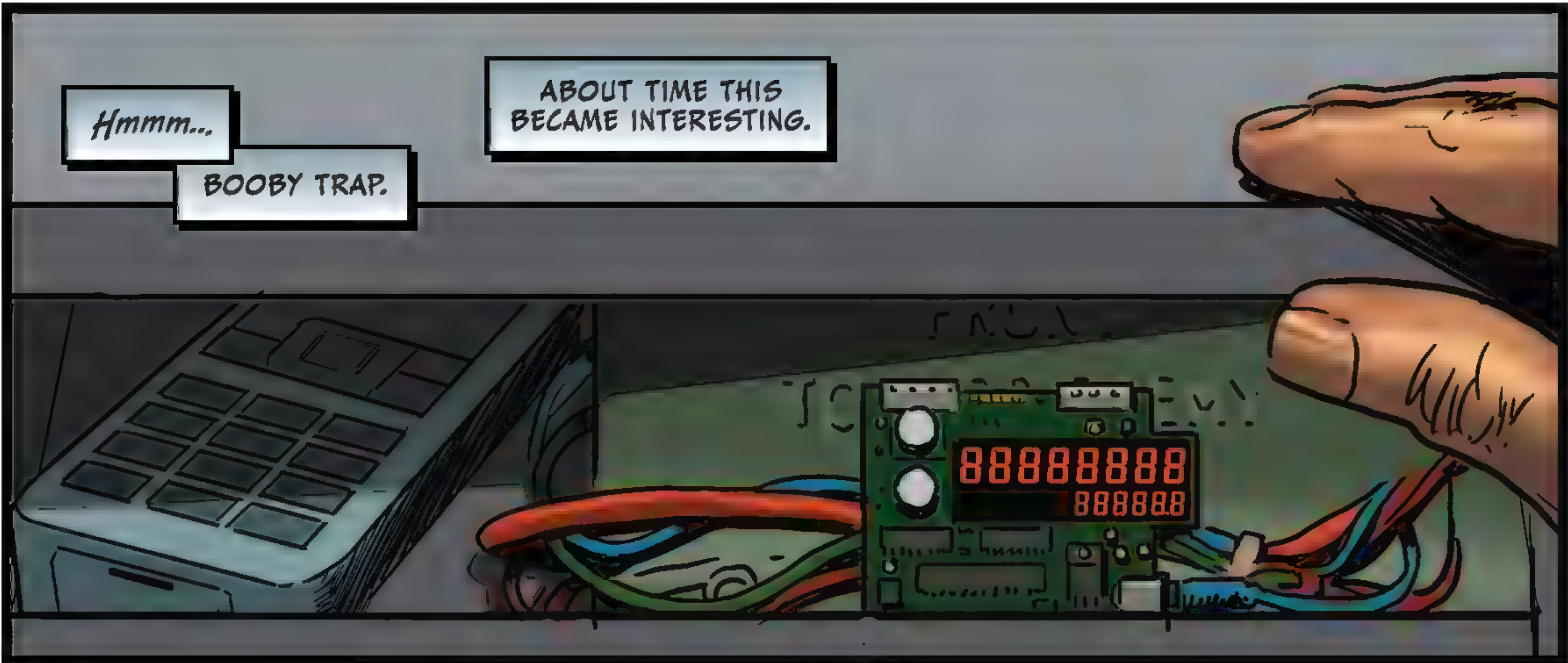
SHE CONTINUES
TO SUCCEED IN JOBS
WHERE **ALL OTHERS**
WOULD **FAIL**. AGAINST
ALL ODDS.



AND SO, AS A **SCIENTIST**,
I **OBSERVE** HER.

AND AS A **CRIMINAL**,
I **FOLLOW** HER.

MIXING **CRIME** AND **SCIENCE**
MAKES FOR A **HEADY BREW**, BUT
THERE IS NONE OTHER **WORTHY**
TO **QUAFF** SUCH A **DRAUGHT** AS I.



Hmmm...

BOOBY TRAP.

ABOUT TIME THIS
BECAME INTERESTING.

JERSEY.

WHEN YOU'RE
A BIG GUY,
PEOPLE ASSUME
YOU'RE *DUMB*.

PART 3:
DUMB GUYS

IF YOU'RE A BIG GUY AND
YOU DON'T SAY MUCH?

BROTHER, PEOPLE
ARE GOING TO THINK
YOU GOT THE BRAINS
OF A *CACTUS*.



THAT'S
OKAY
THOUGH.

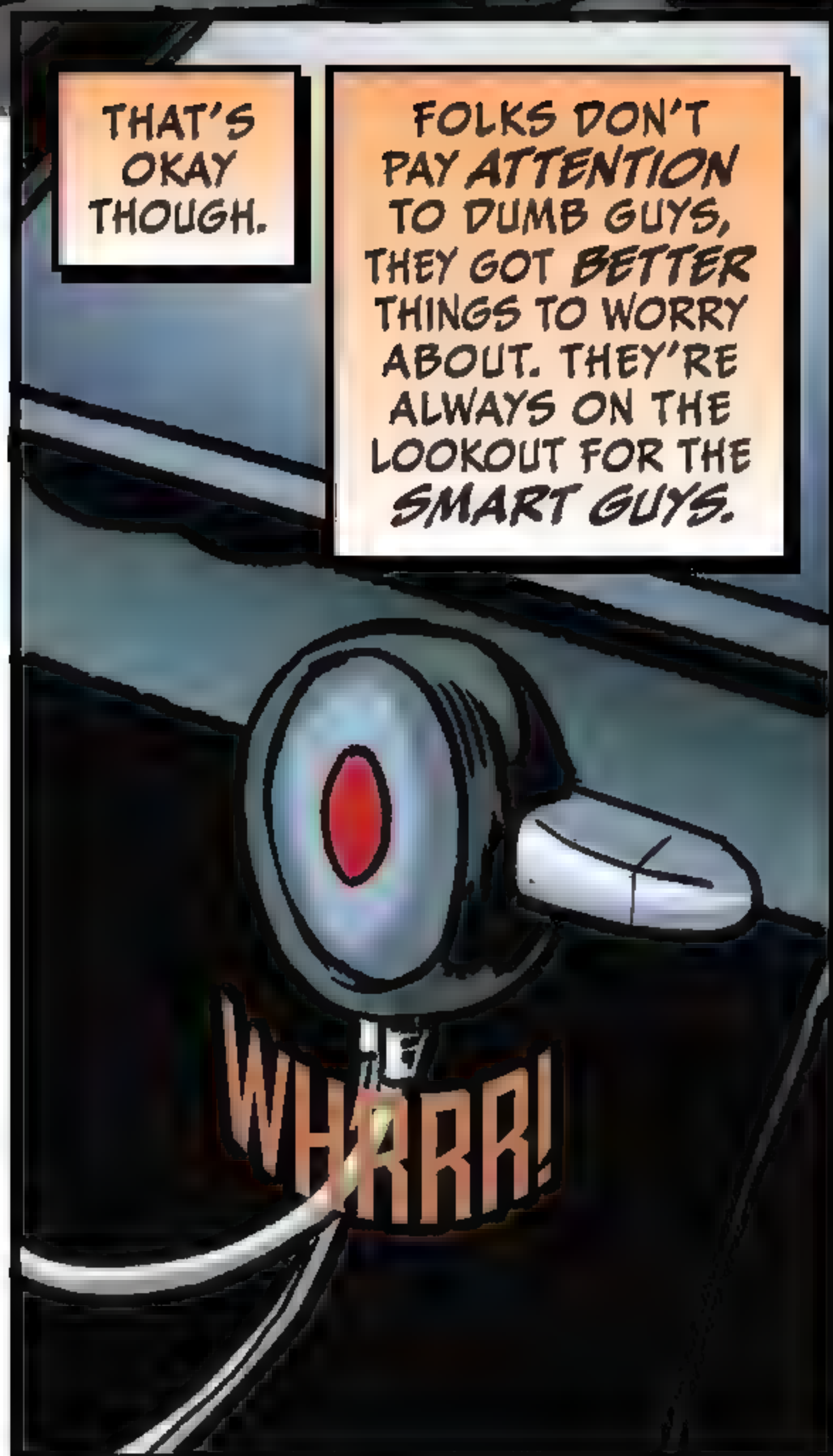
FOLKS DON'T
PAY ATTENTION
TO DUMB GUYS,
THEY GOT *BETTER*
THINGS TO WORRY
ABOUT. THEY'RE
ALWAYS ON THE
LOOKOUT FOR THE
SMART GUYS.

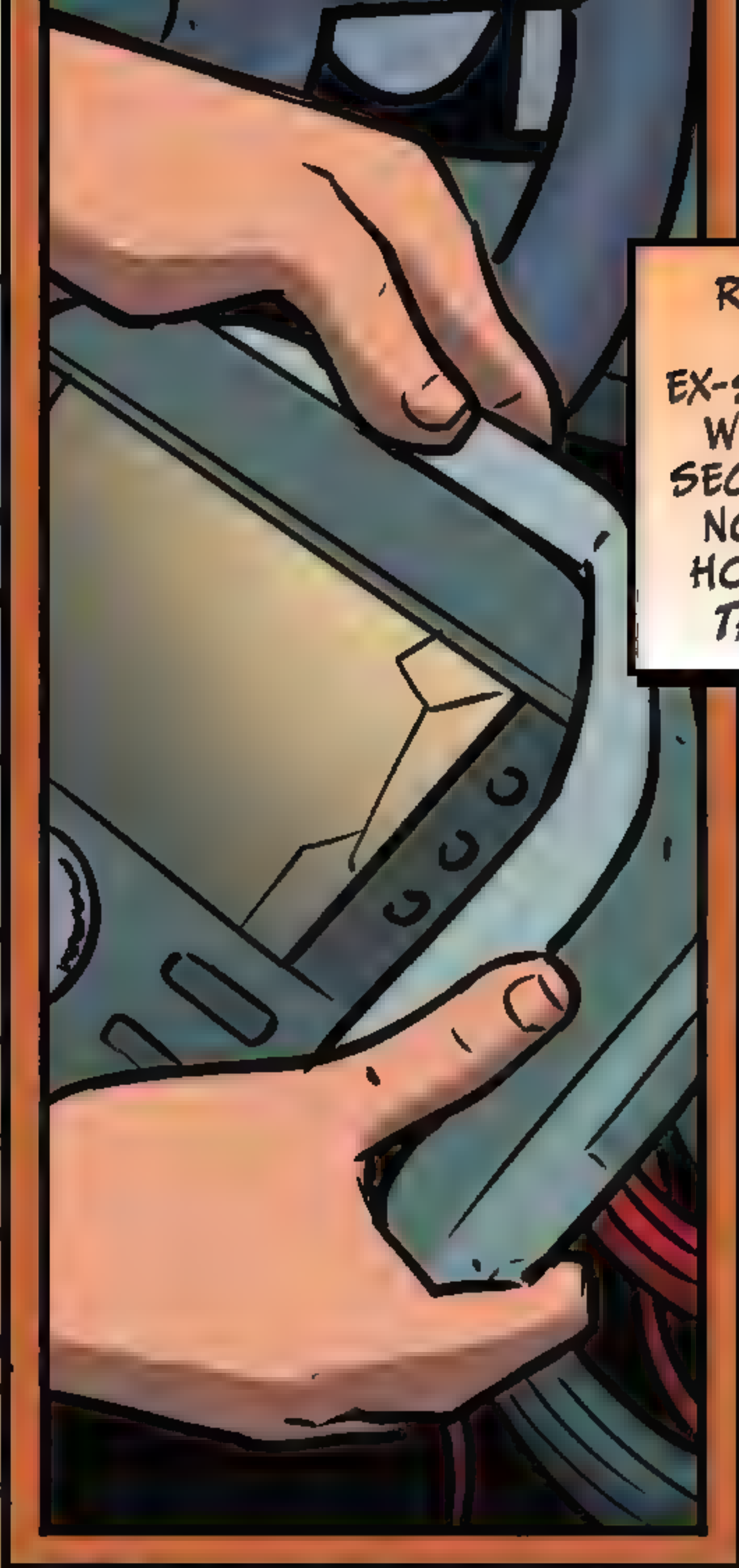
YOU PUT A DUMB GUY
IN *COVERALLS*,
WELL, THEY CAN
WALK INTO PRETTY
MUCH ANYWHERE.

INCLUDING A
DECOM YARD IN
JERSEY FULL OF
EX-S.H.I.E.L.D.
HARDWARE.

SECURITY'S
A JOKE
AT PLACES
LIKE THIS.

AND AFTER
S.H.I.E.L.D.
FOLDED,
THERE'S A LOT
OF THEM,
ALL OVER THE
COUNTRY.





REASONING IS,
THIS IS ALL
EX-S.H.I.E.L.D. STUFF,
WITH SUPERSPY
SECURITY SYSTEMS--
NOBODY COULD
HOT-WIRE ONE 'A
THOSE, RIGHT?

WHY, TO EVEN
TRY? YOU'D
HAVE TO BE
ONE DUMB
GUY.



Heh.



TRANSPONDER?
SEeya.

DON'T MATTER
IF WE'RE TALKING
S.H.I.E.L.D., HYDRA,
WHOEVER. DON'T
MATTER HOW
SUPER-SCIENCE
IT IS.

IF IT'S GOT
WHEELS AND
MOVES?

I CAN
STEAL IT.



I WAS THE ONLY KID
IN ALL OF PITTSBURGH
WHO GOT JUVIE FOR
RIPPING OFF A FLYING CAR.



CALL ME AN EARLY
BLOOMER.

PART 48
**JOURNEY
INTO
MYSTERY**

CAREFUL,
CAREFUL...

YES,
YES...

RRUUUM!

JEEPERS, MISTER,
HOW'D YOU GET
SO STRONG?

Uh...
VEGETABLES...MILK?
WHEATCAKES?

(WHY DON'T
I EVER LIFT WITH
MY LEGS?)

DON'T
SELL
YOURSELF
SHORT,
SPIDER.

THE MAGGIA USE
A DREADNOUGHT
TO LIFT THAT UP.

KRAAK!

SO
THAT'S
IT?

THAT'S IT.

THE SECRET
MAGGIA CATACOMBS.
THEY SAY THERE'S
SOME GHASTLY
GUARDIAN.

COOL.

SUPER
NOT-SCARY.

WHADDYA
SAY?

READY
TO RAGE?

SO LET'S
RECAP.



I'M
TOMB-RAIDING
A SECRET
MOB CRYPT
UNDER LONG
ISLAND WITH MY
SUPER HERO
EX-BOYFRIEND
THAT I SORT-OF
MARRIED AND I
LOOK TOTALLY
GREAT.

YOU THINK
CAPTAIN MARVEL
GETS UP TO STUFF
THIS COOL?

NO WAY.

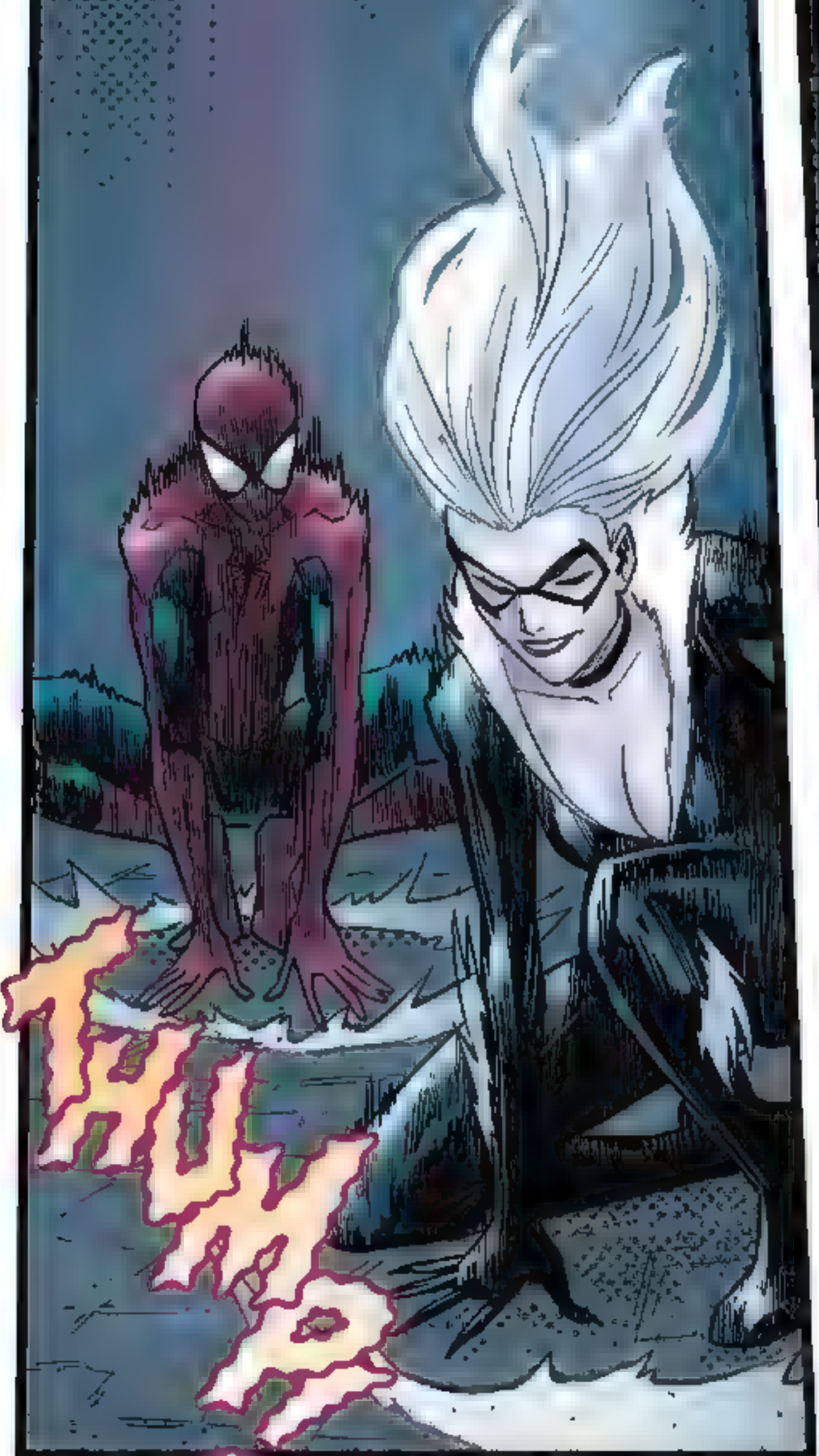
SHE JUST
HANGS OUT IN
SPACE WITH
CANADIANS.



Heh.
WHAT A
NERD.



CRIME
RULES.



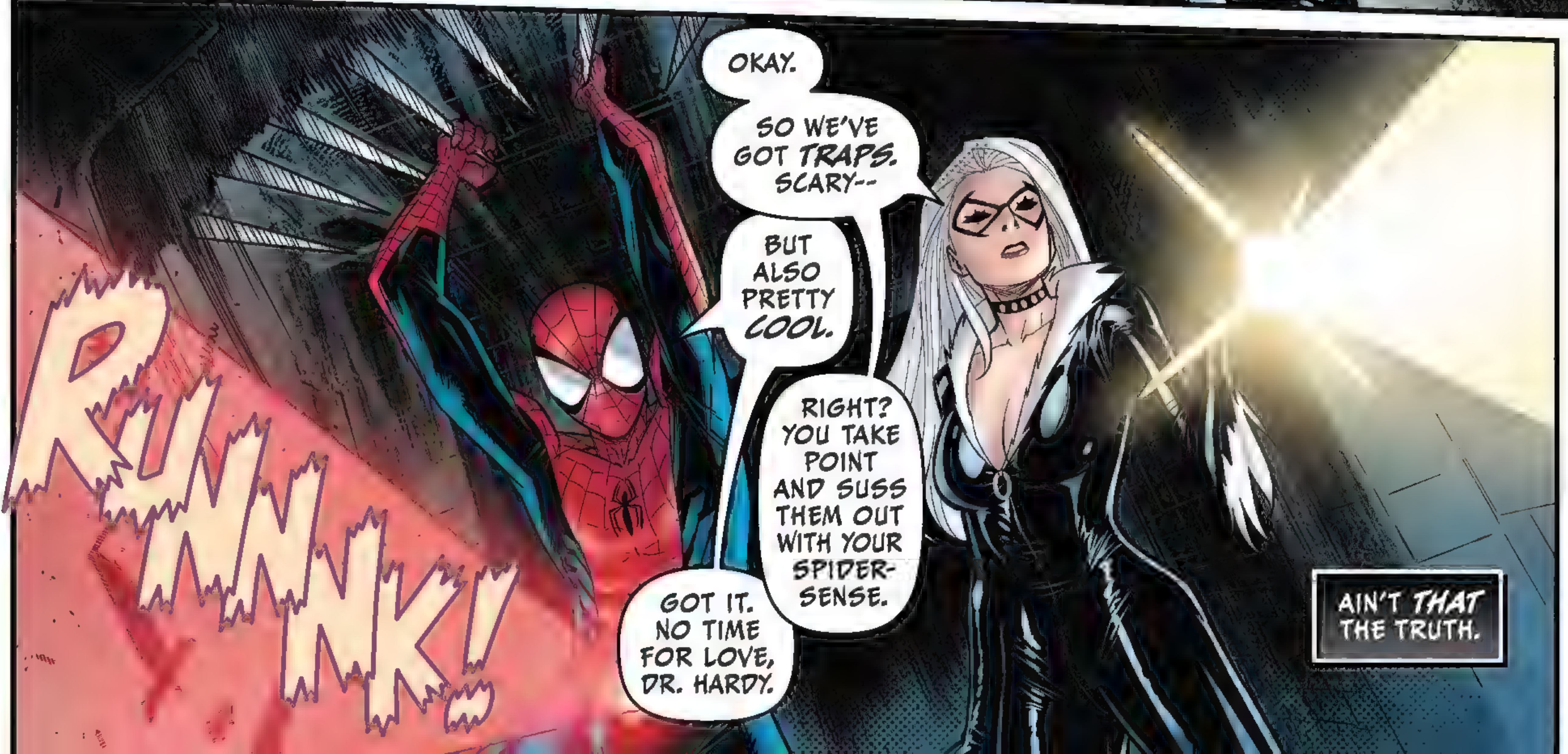
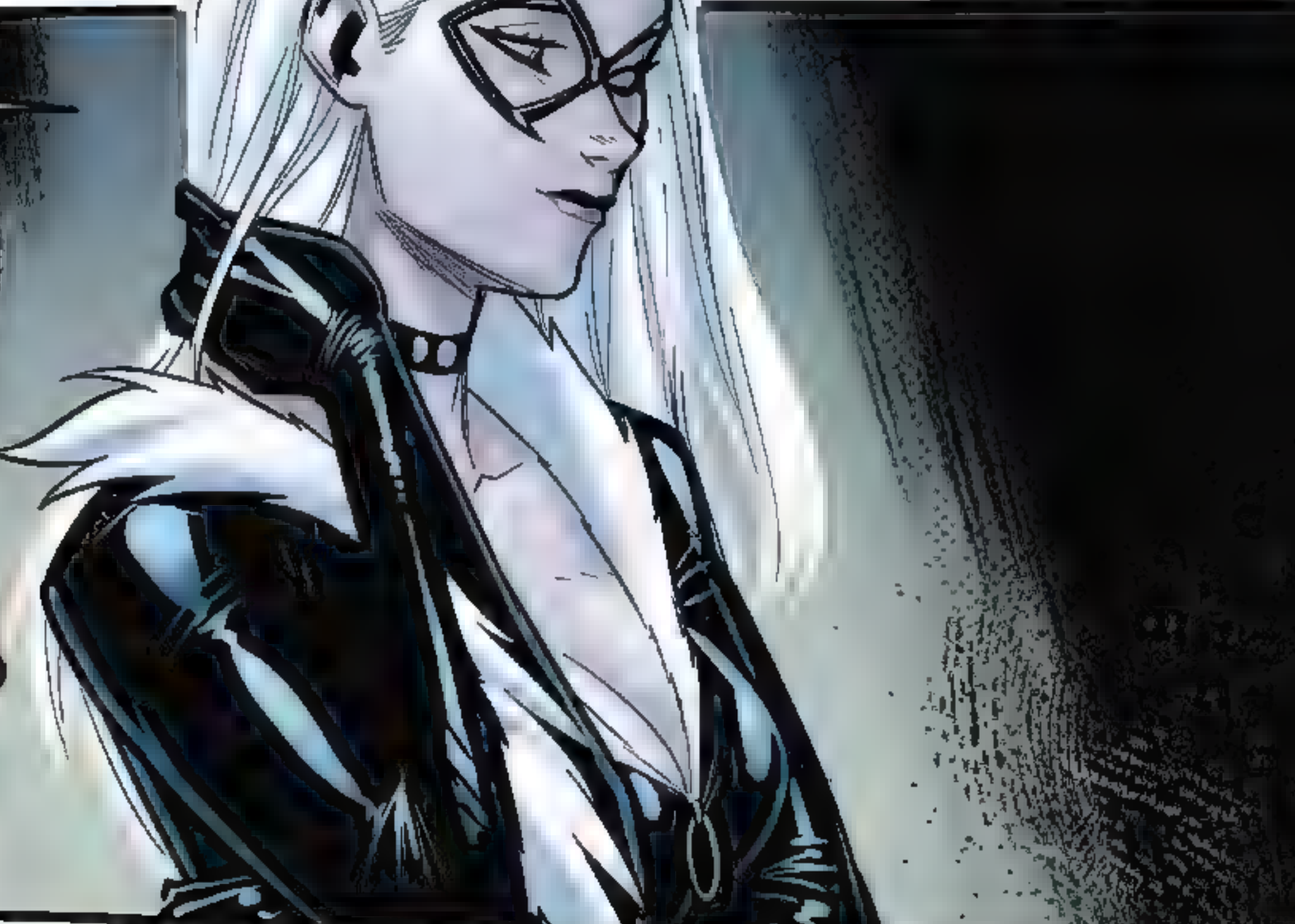


Whoof...
NICE SAVE,
THANKS.

DON'T
MENTION
IT.



Ahem,
RIGHT.
RIGHT,
RIGHT. CRIME.



OKAY.
SO WE'VE
GOT TRAPS.
SCARY--

BUT
ALSO
PRETTY
COOL.

RIGHT?
YOU TAKE
POINT
AND SUSS
THEM OUT
WITH YOUR
SPIDER-
SENSE.

GOT IT.
NO TIME
FOR LOVE,
DR. HARDY.

AIN'T THAT
THE TRUTH.



SO TELL ME
THE STORY.

IT'S
ALL ABOUT
THE MONEY,
SPIDER.

MAGGIA
MONEY.

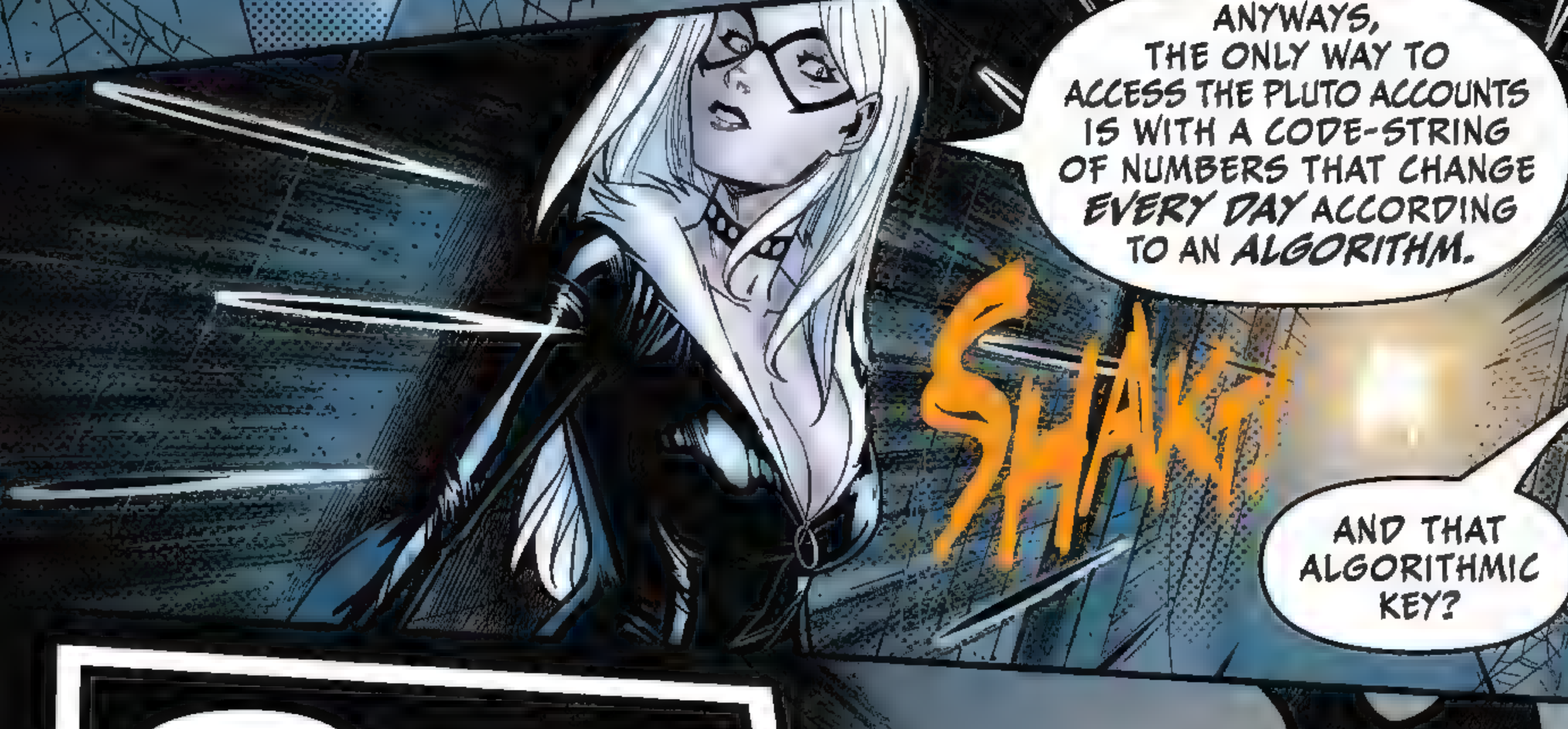


THE MAGGIA
HAVE ACCOUNTS
WITH PLUTO--

PLUTO?

CRIMINAL
BANKING
ORGANIZATION.

SO FAR
UNDERGROUND
THEY'RE
SUBTERRANEAN.
SCARY FOLKS.



ANYWAYS,
THE ONLY WAY TO
ACCESS THE PLUTO ACCOUNTS
IS WITH A CODE-STRING
OF NUMBERS THAT CHANGE
EVERY DAY ACCORDING
TO AN ALGORITHM.

SWAK!

AND THAT
ALGORITHMIC
KEY?



THAT'S
THE GOOD
BIT.

THE DATES
ON THE OLDEST
TOMBS IN HERE.

THE FIRST
MAGGIA FOUNDERS
TO LAND ON
THESE AMERICAN
SHORES.

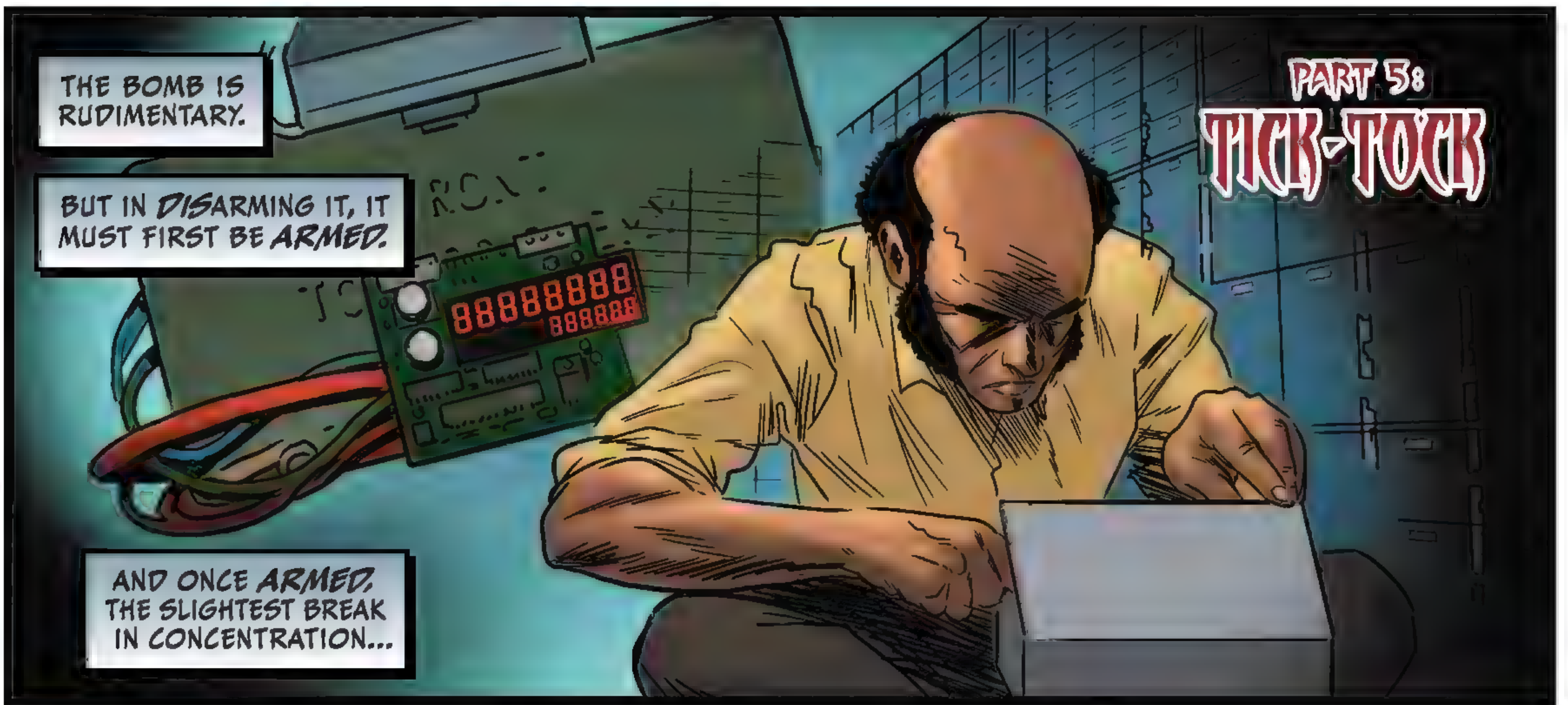


NOW I
TEXT THESE TO
MY GUY...

WAIT.
DIDN'T YOU
SAY SOMETHING
ABOUT A
"GUARDIAN"?

Pssh.
OLD WIVES'
TALE.

...err...



THE BOMB IS
RUDIMENTARY.

BUT IN *DISARMING* IT, IT
MUST FIRST BE *ARMED*.

AND ONCE *ARMED*,
THE SLIGHTEST BREAK
IN CONCENTRATION...

PART 3:
TICK-TOCK

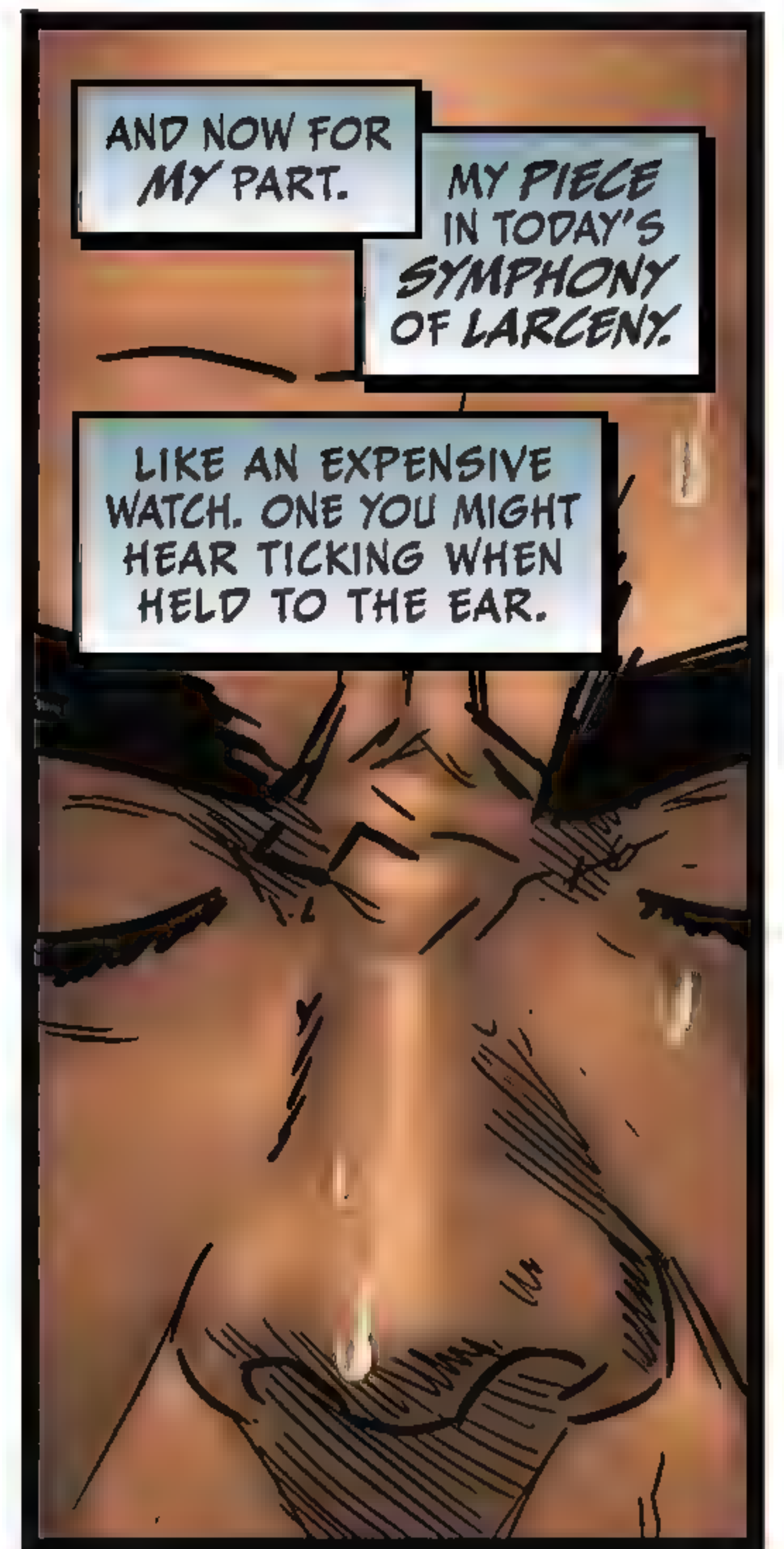


Bee-deep!

Pffft!



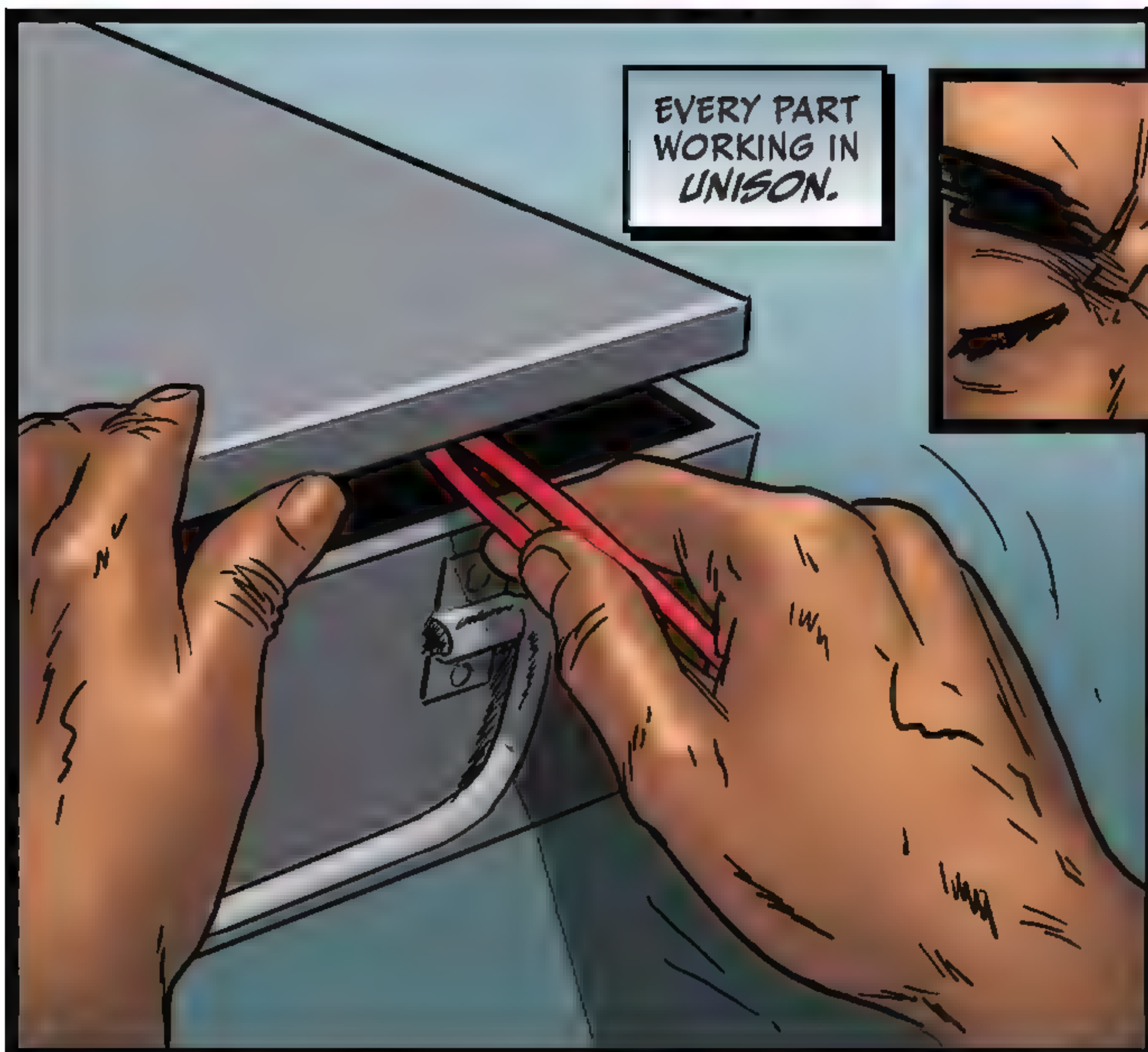
IT WOULD APPEAR HARDY AND
THE *BUG* HAVE DELIVERED.



AND NOW FOR
MY PART.

MY PIECE
IN TODAY'S
SYMPHONY
OF LARCENY.

LIKE AN EXPENSIVE
WATCH. ONE YOU MIGHT
HEAR TICKING WHEN
HELD TO THE EAR.

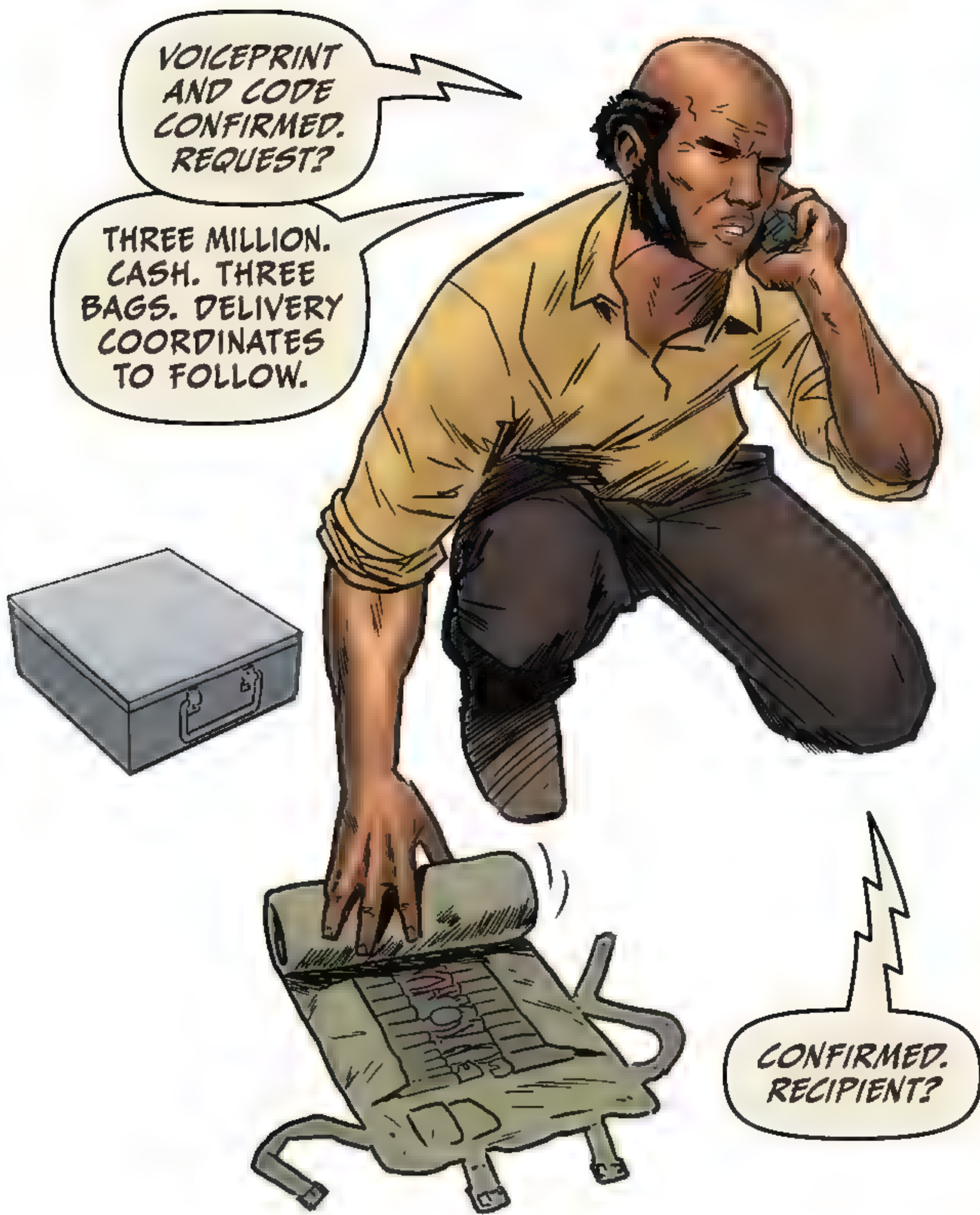
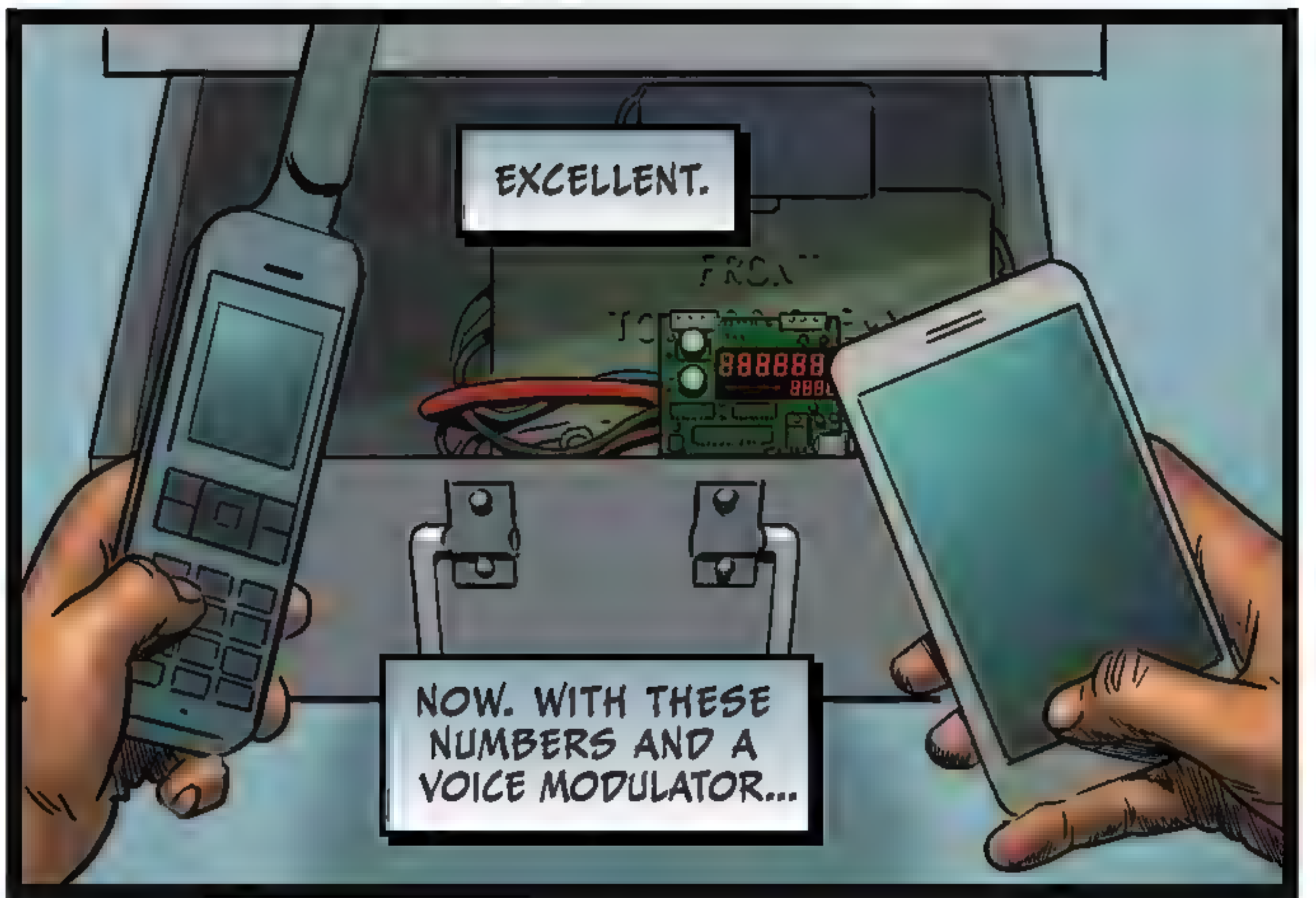


EVERY PART
WORKING IN
UNISON.



TICK-TICK-TICK-TICK.





NONE-SHALL-
DESECRATE-THE-
SACRED-TOMB

HYDRA
DREADNOUGHT.

USED TO BE
CUTTING-EDGE
TERROR WEAPONS
FOR THE BOYS
IN GREEN, NOW
RELEGATED TO MAGGIA
HEIRLOOMS.

Whoa

PART 6:

DREAD NOT

EIGHT .30 CAL
KNUCKLE SPIKES.

HYDRAZINE AND
LIQUID OXYGEN FOR
192 SECONDS OF
FLAME, PER HAND.

FREON FOR 15
SECONDS OF
ICE BLAST.

ZTANG!

100K VOLT ELECTRIC
DISCHARGE. GAMMA
RAY PROJECTORS.

LOOK
OUT,
CAT!

THWIP!

MY SPIDER
IS BRAVE AND
STRONG AS
ALL GET-OUT.
I'VE NEVER MET
A BETTER MAN.

BUT AN ASSASSIN-ROBOT
AT CLOSE QUARTERS?

Splotch!

LOOK OUT
YOURSELF!

AND IF HE TRIES
TO PROTECT ME--

--AND HE WILL--

--THEN
IT'LL GET HIM
BEFORE I CAN
PLAY MY LITTLE
TRICK.

Click!



KEEP MOVING, BUY SOME TIME!

FOR WHAT?

JUST DON'T GET KILLED!

SHINK!



YOU KNOW IT MAKES ME CRAZY WHEN YOU KEEP ME IN THE DARK!

Oh, I DON'T KNOW...

...I THOUGHT WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN **BEST** IN THE DARK.

ARRGH!

TAKE!

MAGGIA USUALLY RUN THEIR DREADS THROUGH TELEPRESENCE, WITH A HUMAN OPERATOR.

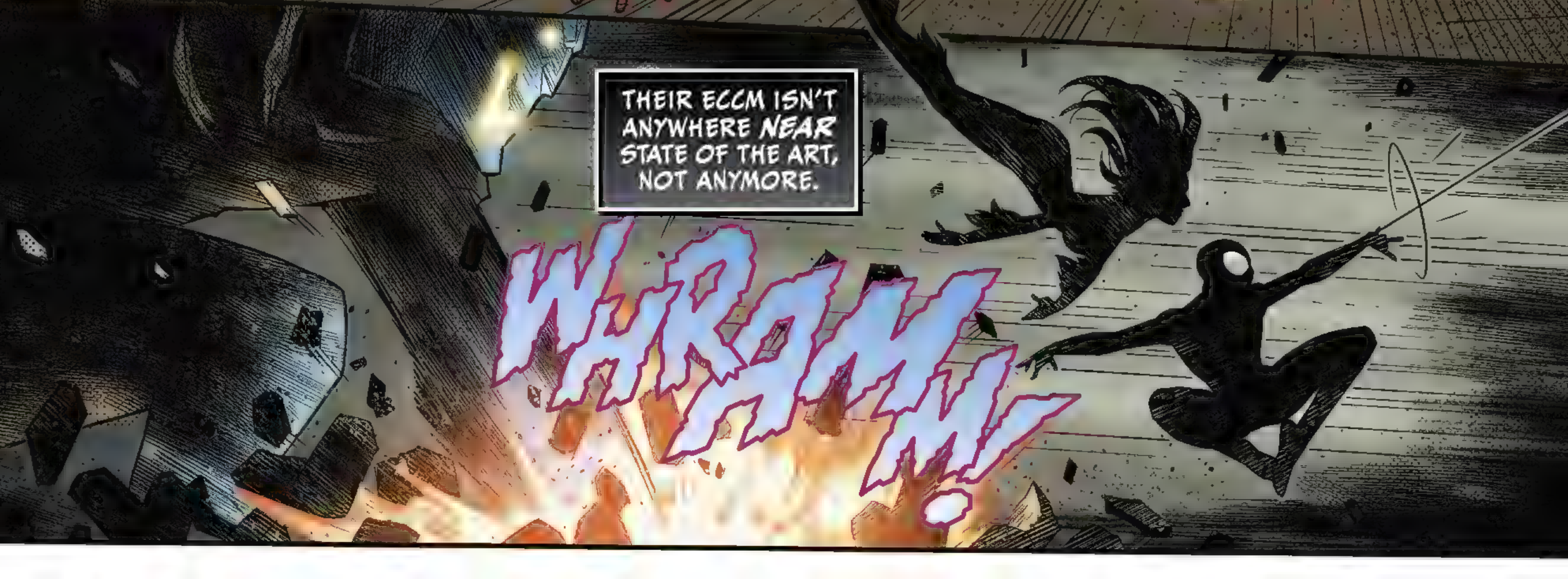
REASON BEING, SOFTWARE AGES FAST.

HYDRA DREADNOUGHT 10 A.I. SOURCE CODE HIT THE DARK WEB YEARS AGO.



RUN!

THEIR ECCM ISN'T ANYWHERE NEAR STATE OF THE ART, NOT ANYMORE.



WRRAH!

NONE-SHALL-
NONE-SHALL-

-SHALL-ALL-
ALL-ALL-

ALL OF WHICH MEANS:
IF YOU BROADCAST
A VIRUS, CODED
BY A LUNATIC WITH A
PARTICULAR BENT FOR
WRECKING THINGS...

...WHO
WORKS
FOR ME...

...THEN THE DREAD'S
POOR OLD COLD WAR
CPU WILL BE LEAKING
CODE OUT OF ITS
CHROMED EARS.

THOOM!

WHAT
DID YOU
DO?

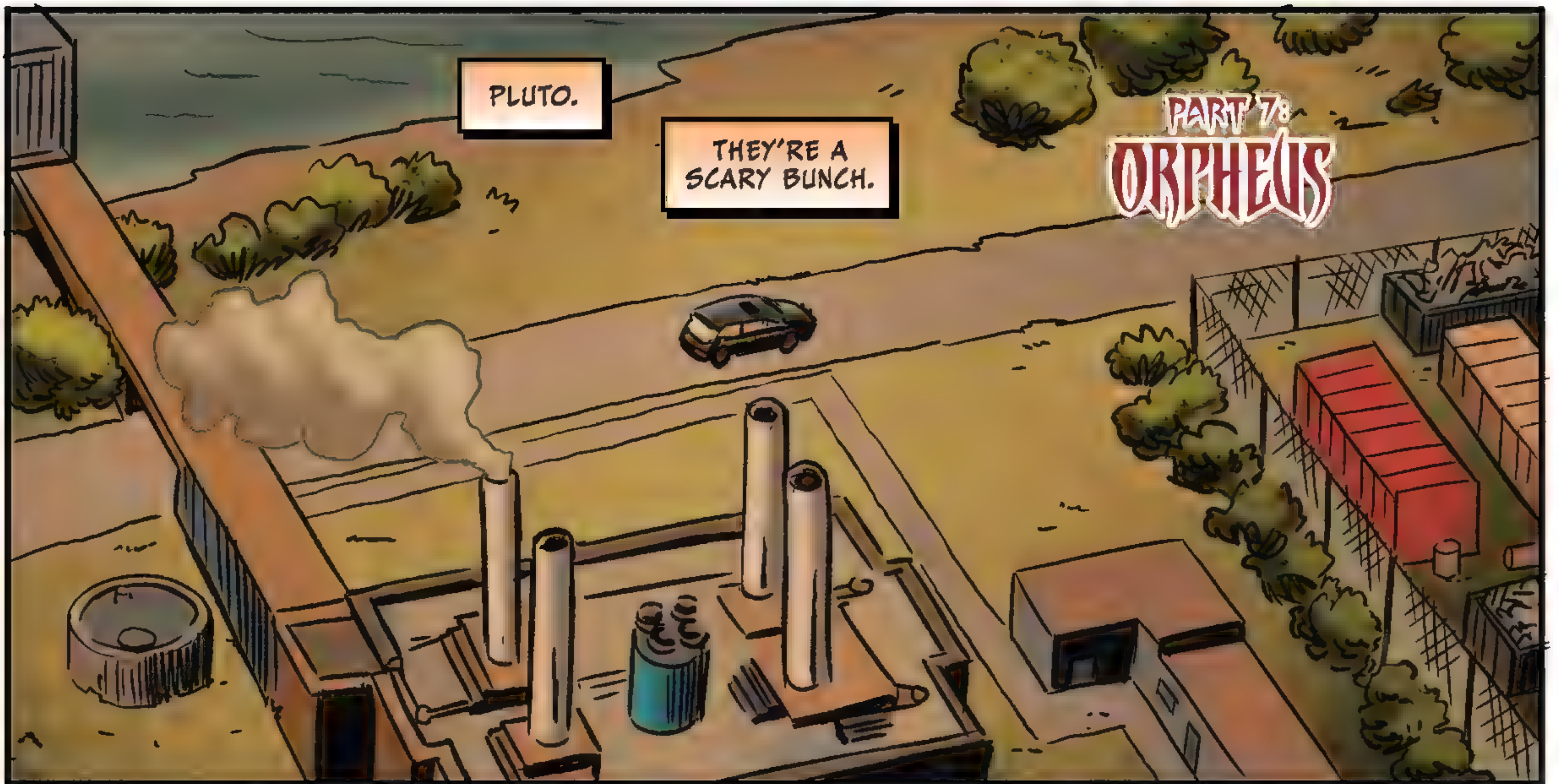
WOULD
YOU BELIEVE
FEMININE
WILES?

I'VE
SEEN
THE EFFECT
OF YOUR
FEMININE
WILES.

SO
YES.

COME ON.

IT'S
ALMOST
TIME TO PUT
THIS CAPER
TO BED.



PLUTO.

THEY'RE A
SCARY BUNCH.

PART 78
ORPHEUS



CROOK
BANKERS.

THINGS THEY DO TO THEM
WHO CROSS 'EM?

NOT
WORTH
THINKIN'
ABOUT.



BUT THIS IS
THE BOSS' PLAN.

AND IF SHE SAYS
THIS IS THE PLAY...

...THEN *THIS*
IS THE PLAY

HAIL
HYDRA.



DELIVERED
AND
WITNESSED.

THANKS.



WELL, THAT
WENT OKAY.



BUT I DON'T LIKE
THEM WATCHING ME.



WAIT-- STOP HIM!



Ah, NUTS.

BUDDA
BUDDA BUDDA!





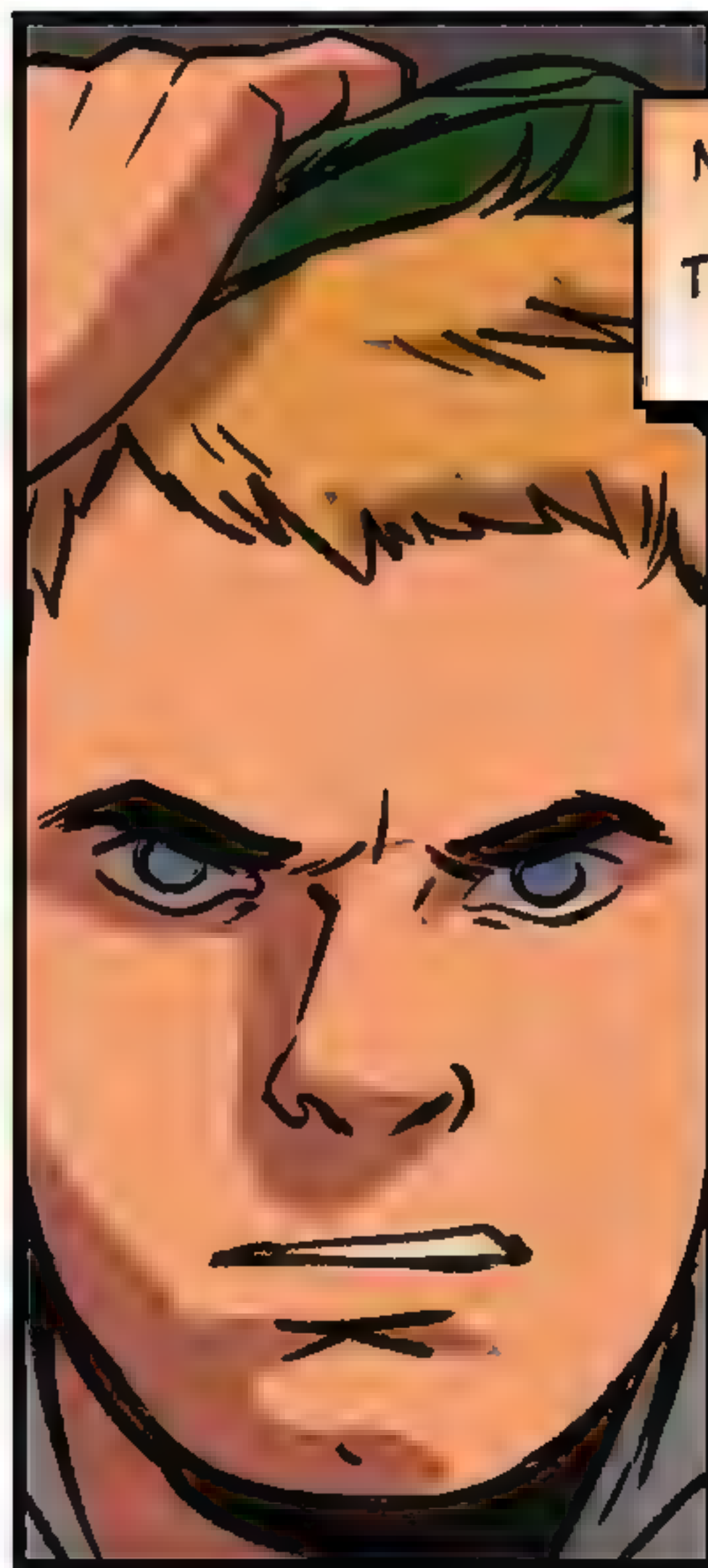


ASSETS:

I GOT A
S.H.I.E.L.D.
ARMORED SUV,
THREE MILLION
DOLLARS, AND
ELVIS IS BACK!
IN THE CD PLAYER.

PART 98

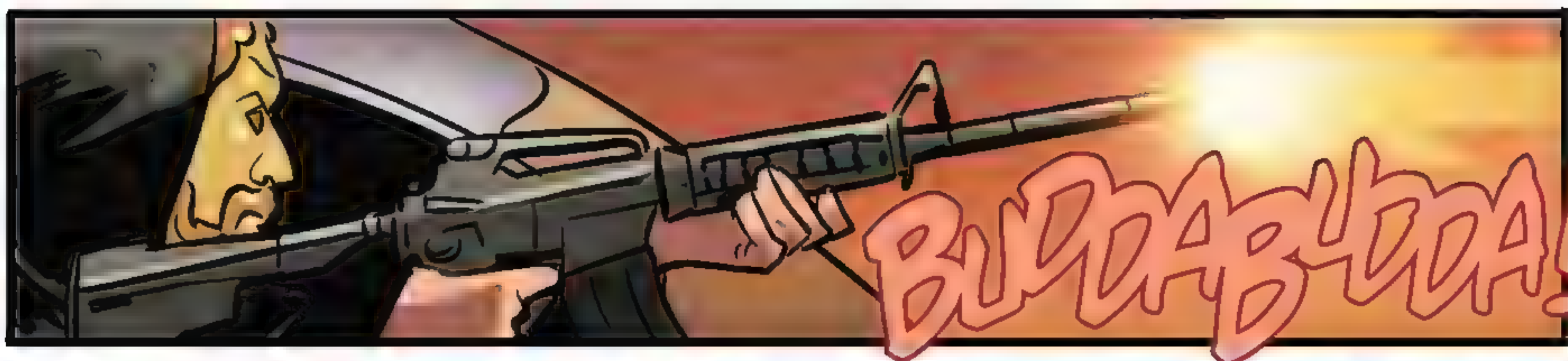
PITTSBURGH
AMATEURS



NOW LET'S
SEE HOW
THESE BOYS
DRIVE.



NOT BAD,
NOT BAD.



NOT BAD FOR JERSEY.



BUT BY
PITTSBURGH
STANDARDS?

AMATEURS.



Hmmm...

THAT'S A
SURPRISE.

S'FINE THOUGH.
THEY WANT
TO SCRATCH
THIS ARMOR,
IT'D TAKE--



--THAT!

GHAAHAAH!



LIKE
I SAID.

PITTSBURGH
AMATEURS.

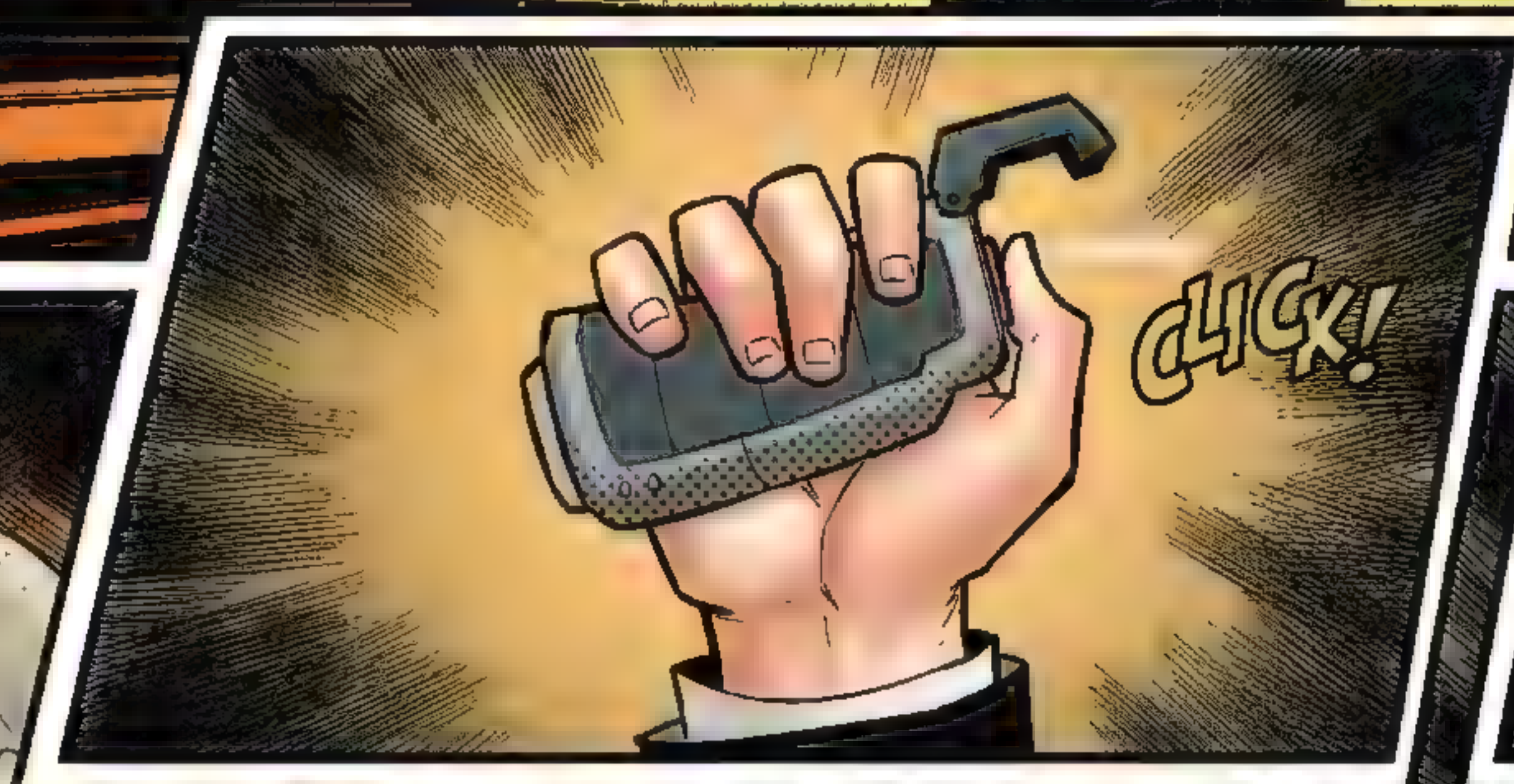


PART 10:
**THE
GREAT
ESCAPE**



--AND TWO
MORE SHALL TAKE
ITS PLACE!

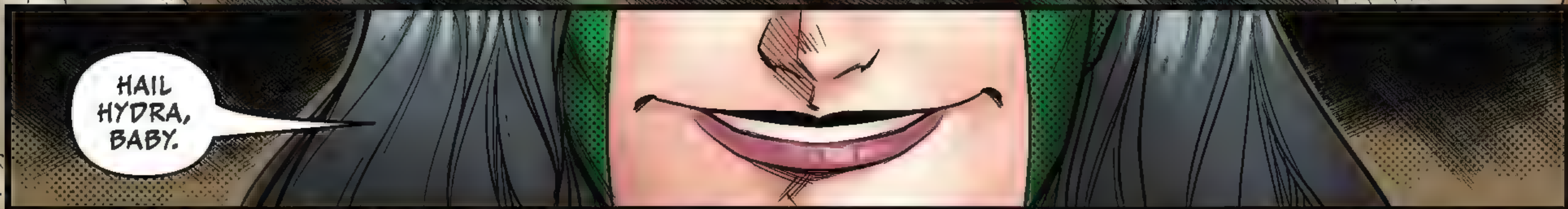
**YEAH!
TWO!**



click!



click!



HAIL
HYDRA,
BABY.



CHAOS.

FOOSH!

FOOSH!

FOOSH!

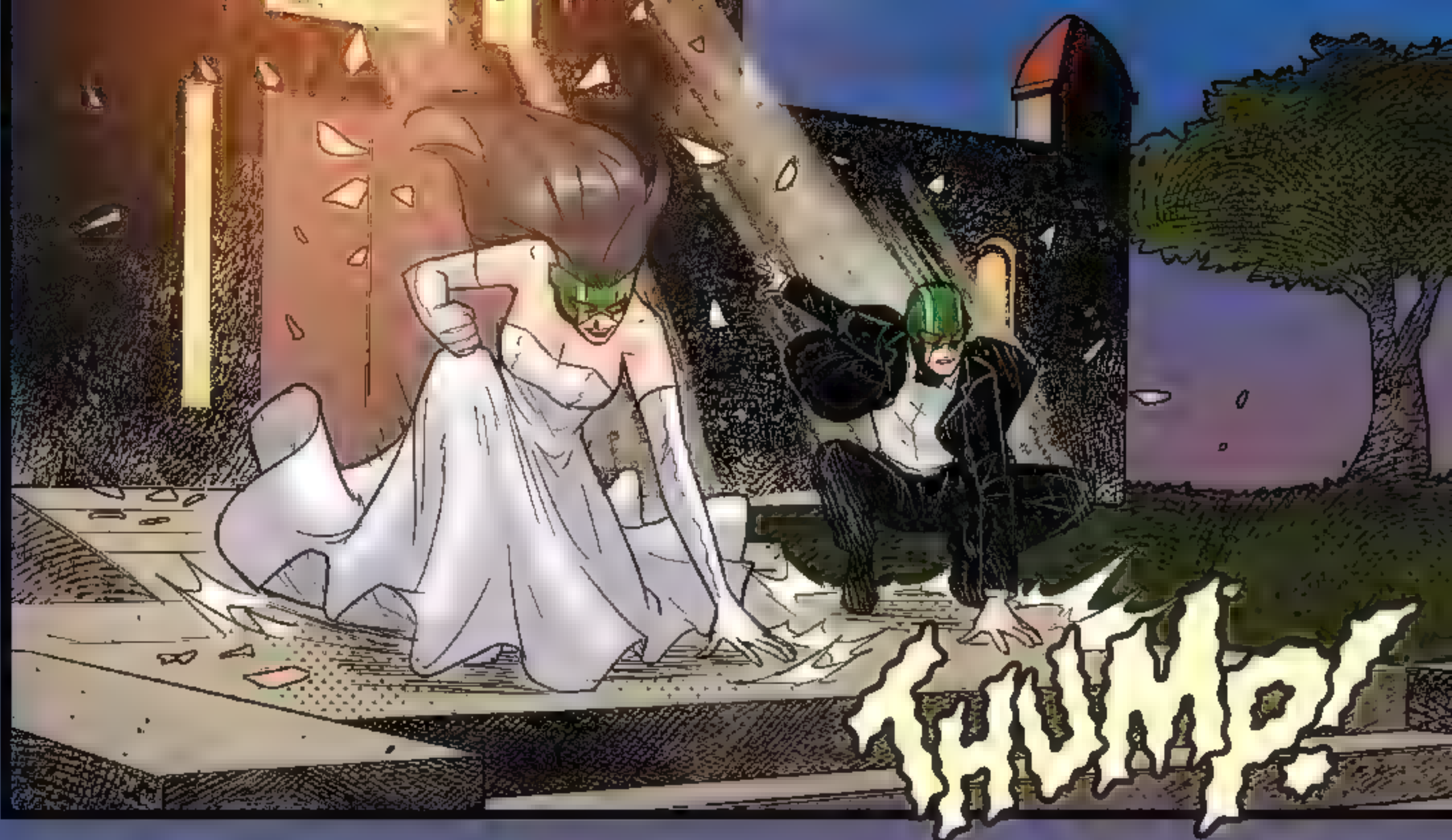
FOOSH!

FOOSH!

BEAUTIFUL
CHAOS.

THE SMOKE
GOES OFF,
AND THESE
CLOWNS
THINK IT'S
THE END OF
THE WORLD.

ALL THESE
MAGGIA LORDS
AND LADIES,
WHO SENT THEIR
OWN CHILDREN TO
KILL EACH OTHER,
WHO THOUGHT
THEY OWNED
THE WORLD.



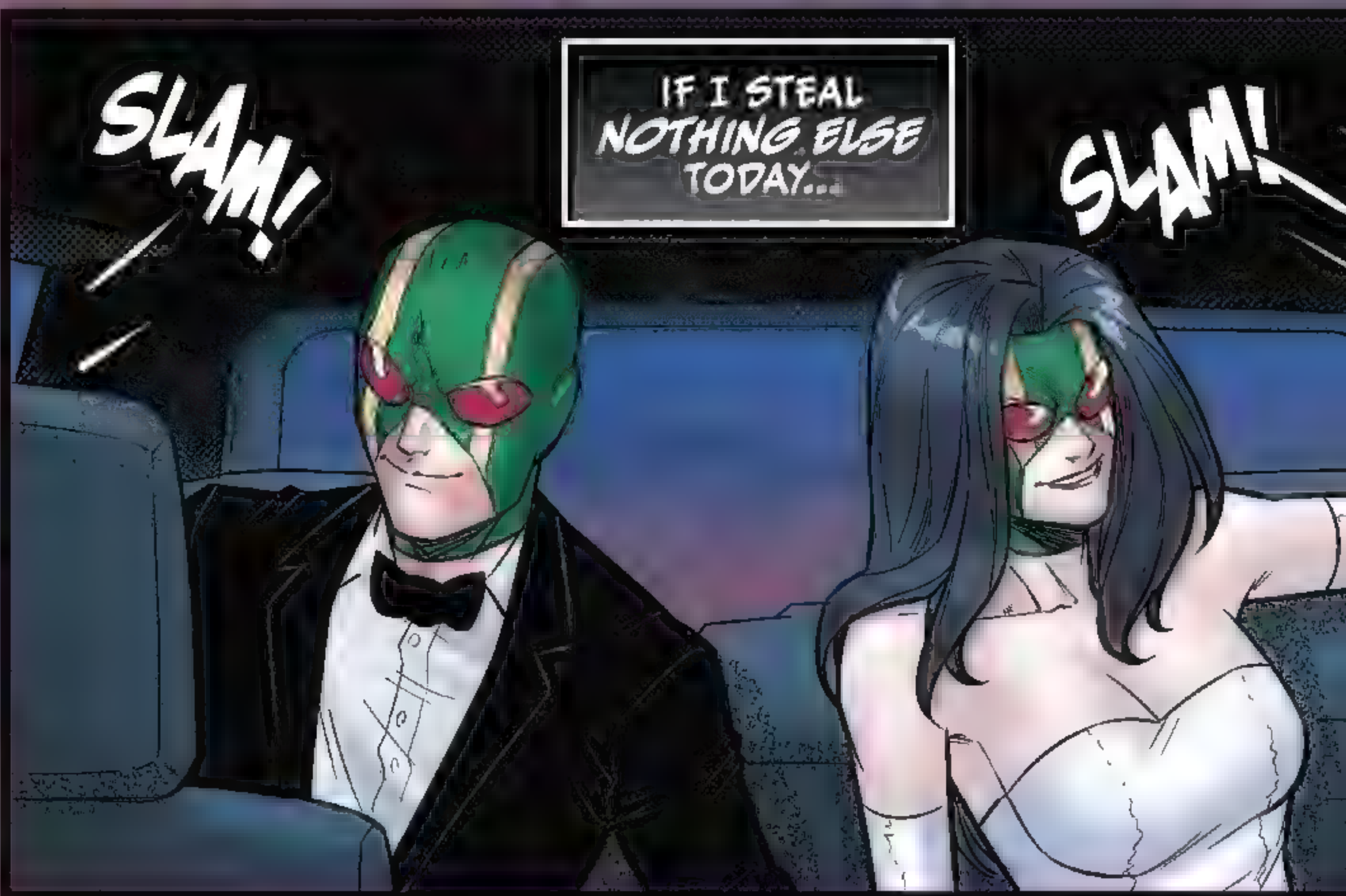
REDUCED TO
BEING TERRIFIED
FOR THEIR LIVES
JUST LIKE
EVERYONE ELSE.



SLAM!

IF I STEAL
NOTHING ELSE
TODAY...

SLAM!



...I'LL BE SATISFIED
WITH TAKING THEIR
DIGNITY WITH ME.

HAHAHAHA!





"MY MOTHER WAS A MARTYR."

"TWICE. VICTORIOUS BOTH TIMES, OBVIOUSLY."

PART II: THE MARTYRS

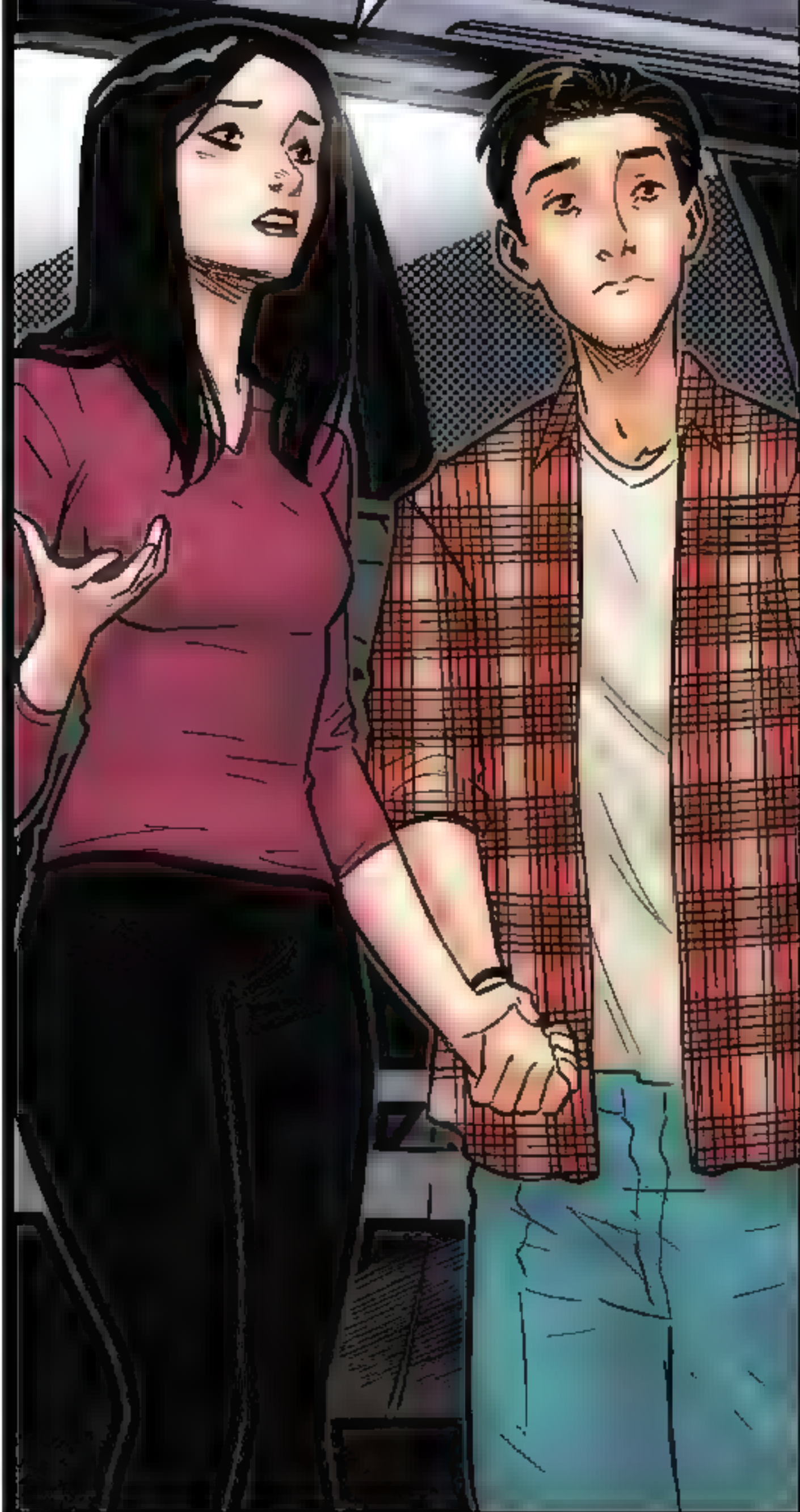
GROWING UP, THEY TOLD US THAT TO BE A MARTYR, TO KILL FOR THE FAMILY...

...IT WAS THE **FAST TRACK**. FOR RANK, FOR POSITION IN THE MAGGIA.



MY FATHER WAS A MARTYR. THREE TIMES.

FOR HIM, IT WAS AN **HONOR**. A WAY TO SHOW YOUR **COMMITMENT**, TO **REPAY** THE FAMILY FOR EVERYTHING THEY'D GIVEN YOU.



YOU BELIEVE IT... BECAUSE YOU WERE **RAISED** TO BELIEVE IT.

UNTIL YOU'RE CALLED TO BE WED. AND YOU **REALIZE...**

YOU REALIZE YOU'RE BEING TOLD TO **KILL** SOMEONE YOU'VE KNOWN ALL YOUR LIFE.

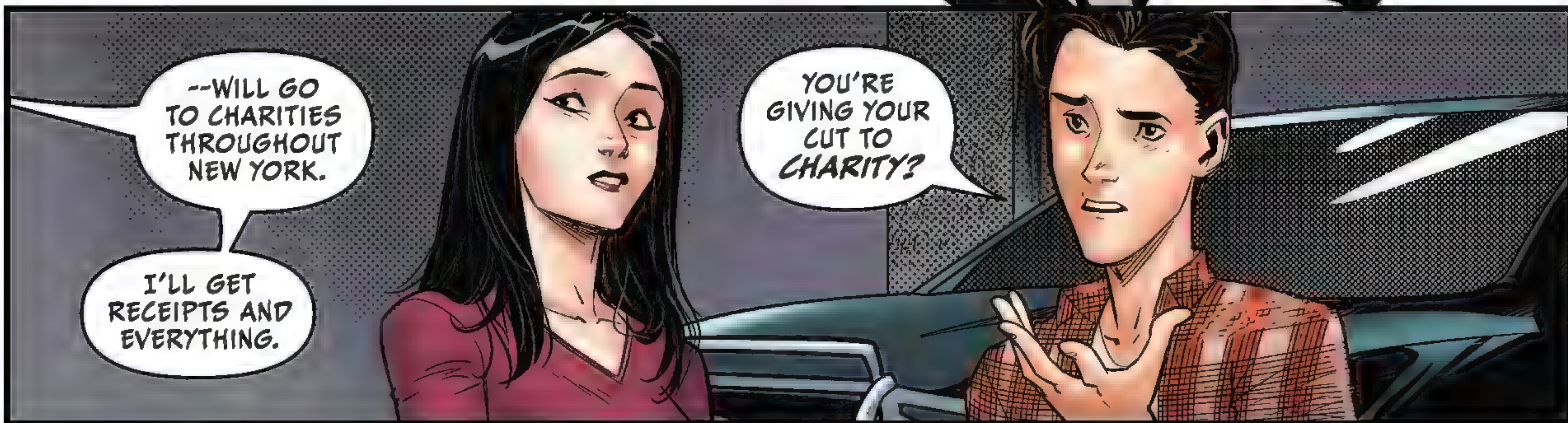


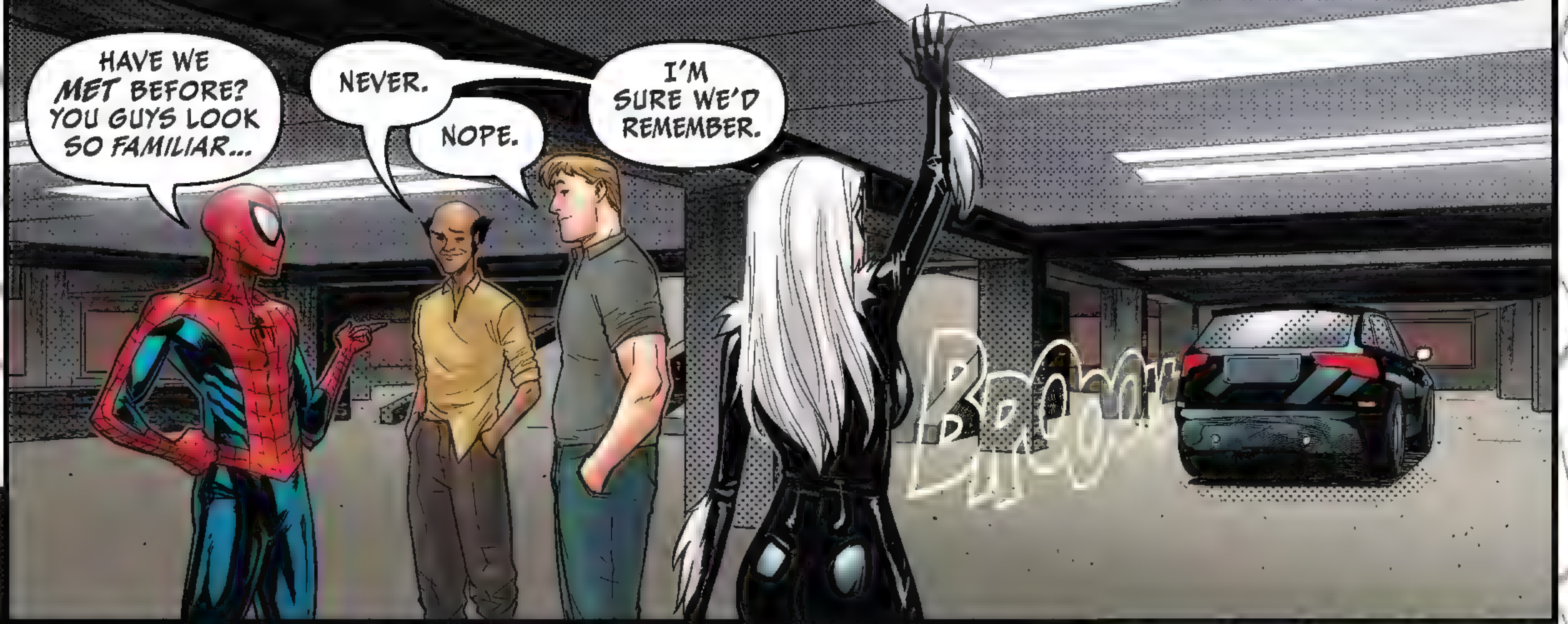
AND YOU TWO FELL IN LOVE! TWO MARTYRS, FROM FEUDING FAMILIES!

WHY, IT'S JUST LIKE A SEXY AND FREE-SPIRITED **THIEF** STEALING THE HEART OF A **BEAUTIFUL** BUT **REPPRESSED** SUPER HERO!

IT'S REALLY **NOT**.







HAVE WE MET BEFORE? YOU GUYS LOOK SO FAMILIAR...

NEVER.

NOPE.

I'M SURE WE'D REMEMBER.

Broom

WE DID A GOOD THING TODAY, SPIDER.

WE GAVE THOSE KIDS A LIFE.

IT...

IT WAS A GOOD PLAN.

CRAZY, BUT THEN EVERYTHING WITH YOU ALWAYS IS, ISN'T IT?

IT WAS GOOD THOUGH, WASN'T IT?

YEAH. WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN A GOOD TEAM.

THOUGH I'VE STILL GOT A SCAR FROM THE LAST TIME YOU ASKED ME TO MARRY YOU.*

HA! THAT WAS A GOOD ONE, RIGHT.

*SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #300!



WELL, I GUESS I'D BETTER SWING OFF.

I NEED TO CATCH SOME MUGGERS OR SOMETHING TO MAKE UP FOR ALL THIS CRIME.

HA! I NEED TO TAKE THE BOYS OUT TO DINNER FOR ALL THEIR HARD WORK--

--THEN I'M GETTING FIRED UP ON CHAMPAGNE.

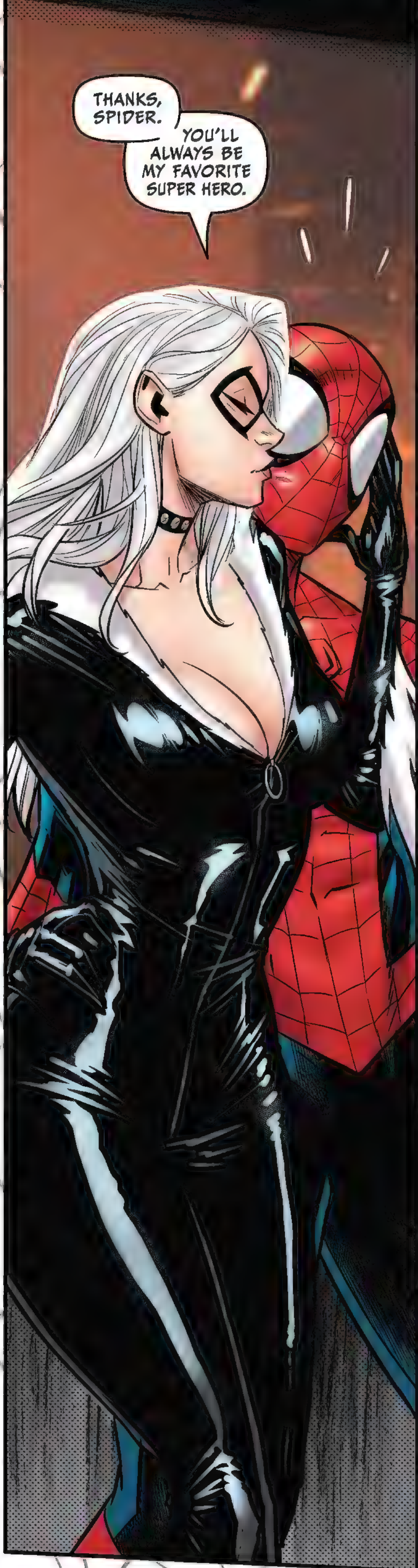


YOU COULD COME ALONG, IF YOU LIKE...

CAT...

...BUT THAT'S NOT WHO WE ARE ANYMORE.

AND YOU'VE GOT THAT REDHEAD TO GET HOME TO.





FREE COMIC BOOK DAY 2020 • MOONLIGHTING

"THERE
HE IS."

"I TOLD YOU.
DON'T I ALWAYS
COME THROUGH?"

"KEEP IN MIND
THIS IS ALL
YOUR FAULT."

"HEY, BABE, I DIDN'T
CRASH THAT MAGGIA
WEDDING ALL BY
MYSELF."

"BESIDES, IS THAT ANY
WAY TO TALK TO YOUR
BEAUTIFUL WIFE?"

I'M HERE,
I'M HERE.

"YOU--I--WE'RE
NOT MARRIED!"

"WHAT?!"

"WHAT ABOUT OUR
VOWS? DID THEY MEAN
NOTHING TO YOU?"

WE REALLY
GOT TO DO THIS
UP HERE?

BECAUSE:
YIKES.

"NO! IT WAS A
SCAM! IT WAS A
SCAM WEDDING!"

"HAHAHA!"

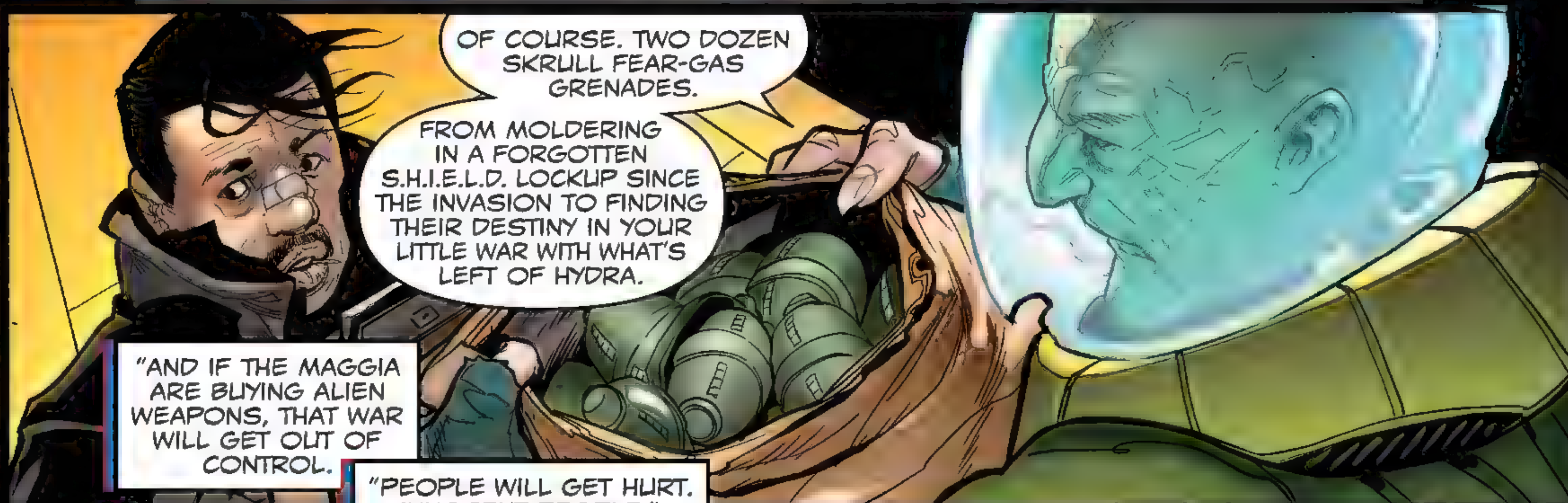
I AM
THE VULTURE,
YOU CRETIN.

I DO
MY BUSINESS
WHERE I PLEASE.
AND YOUR
TERROR...

...PLEASES
ME.

UH, YEAH,
OKAY. YOU GOT
THE STUFF?

"WHEN WE WENT UNDERCOVER
TO SAVE THOSE KIDS FROM THE
MAGGIA'S 'WEDDING' AND YOU...
CONFISCATED THEIR...ILL-GOTTEN
GAINS, THEN FRAMED HYDRA, THEY
WENT TO WAR IN THE STREETS."



OF COURSE. TWO DOZEN
SKRULL FEAR-GAS
GRENADES.

FROM MOLDERING
IN A FORGOTTEN
S.H.I.E.L.D. LOCKUP SINCE
THE INVASION TO FINDING
THEIR DESTINY IN YOUR
LITTLE WAR WITH WHAT'S
LEFT OF HYDRA.

"AND IF THE MAGGIA
ARE BUYING ALIEN
WEAPONS, THAT WAR
WILL GET OUT OF
CONTROL.

"PEOPLE WILL GET HURT.
INNOCENT PEOPLE."



HMM? SORRY,
SPIDER. I NODDED
OFF.

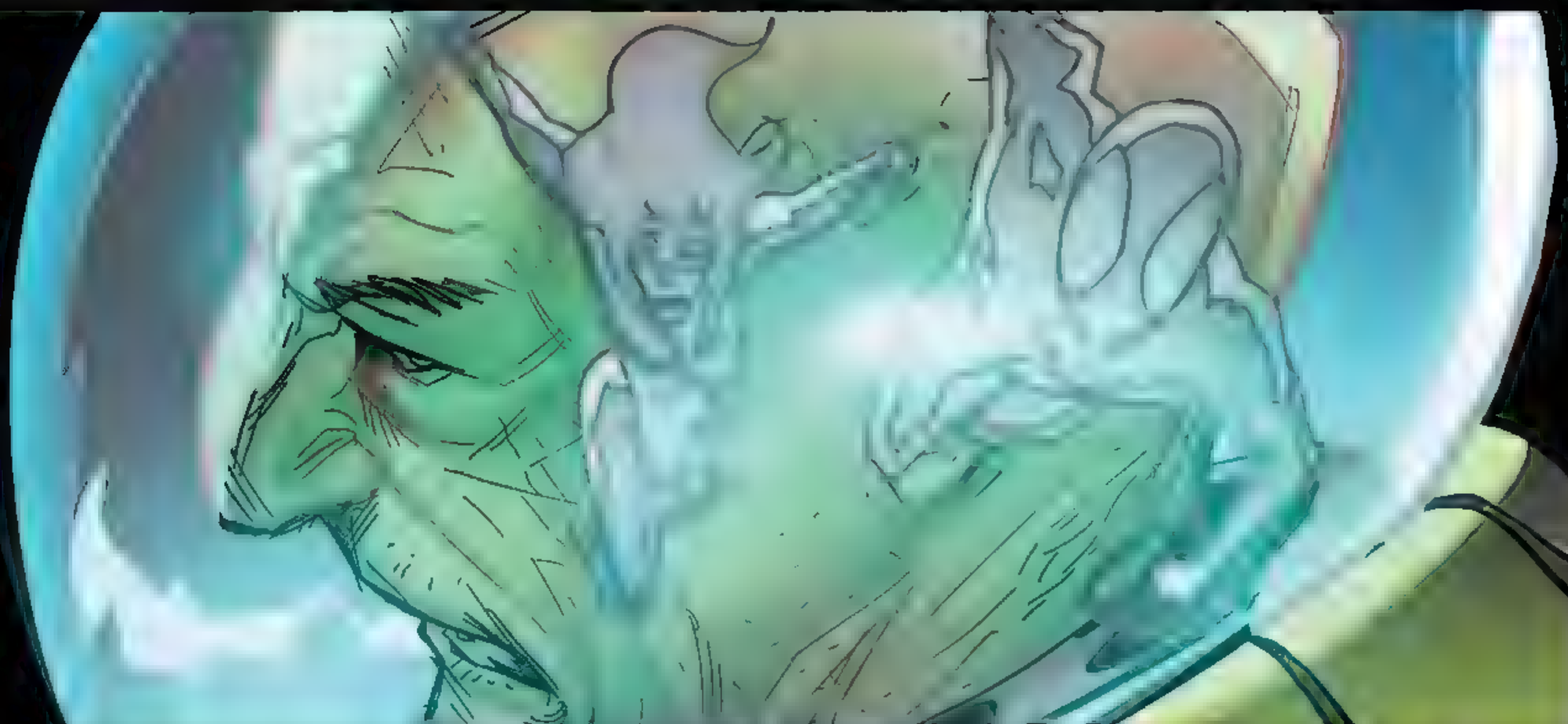
WERE YOU
DOING YOUR
"RESPONSIBILITY,
DUTY, INNOCENT
PEOPLE" SPEECH
AGAIN?

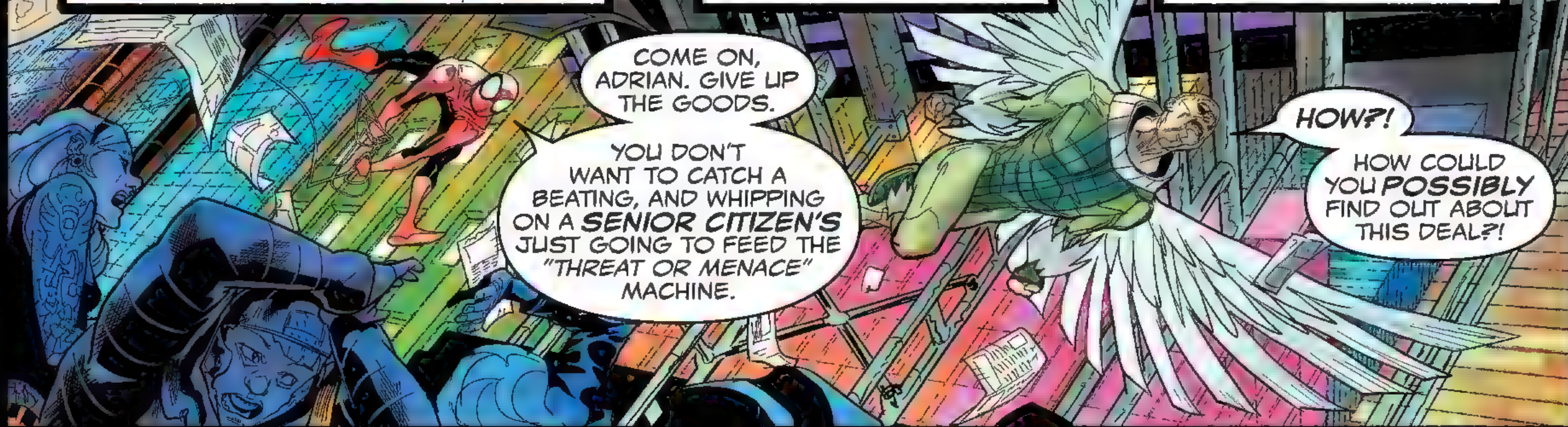
~~SIGH~~...
WHY DO I EVEN
BOTHER?

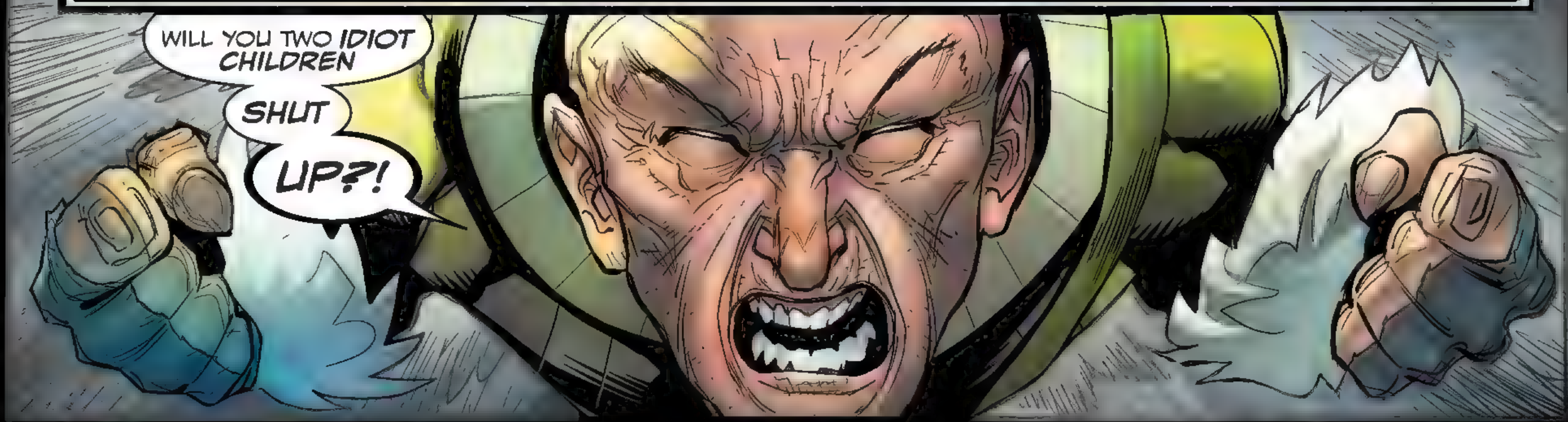
WHATEVER,
LET'S DO
THIS.

...FOR I
AM **KING** OF
THESE RAREFIED
AIRS, THE **LORD**
OF THE
HEIGHTS!

NOTHING
ESCAPES MY
NOTICE IN THESE
SKIES--









YOU MORONS!
YOU ABSOLUTE
BUFFOONS!

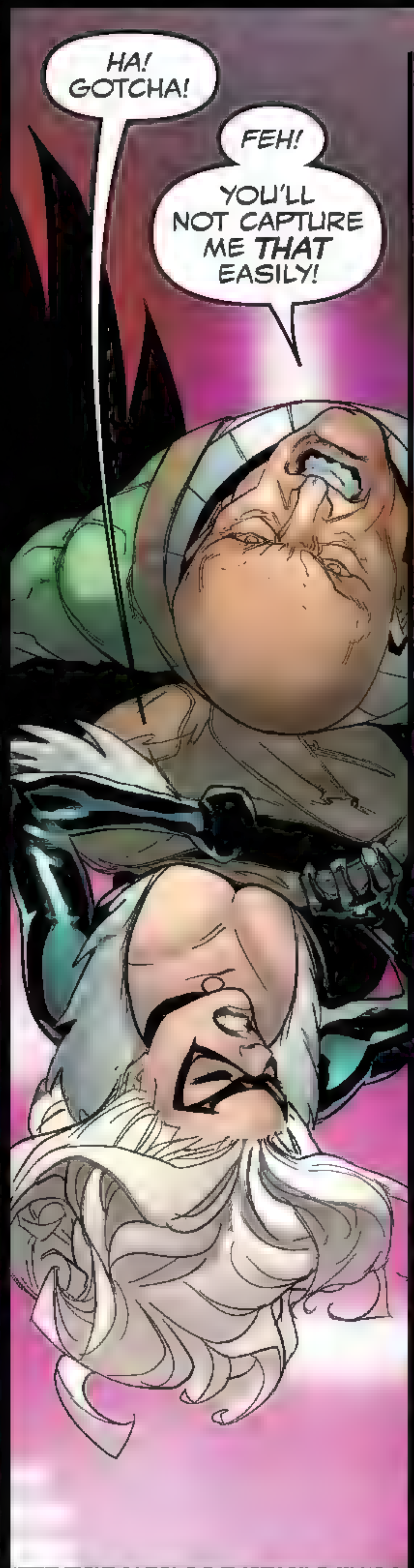
ALL YOU
DO, THE TWO
OF YOU!

TALK,
TALK,
TALK!

HEY,
DO YOU WANT TO
GET SUSHI AFTER
THIS?

I HAD
SUSHI FOR
LUNCH.
TACOS?

AAARGHH!!!



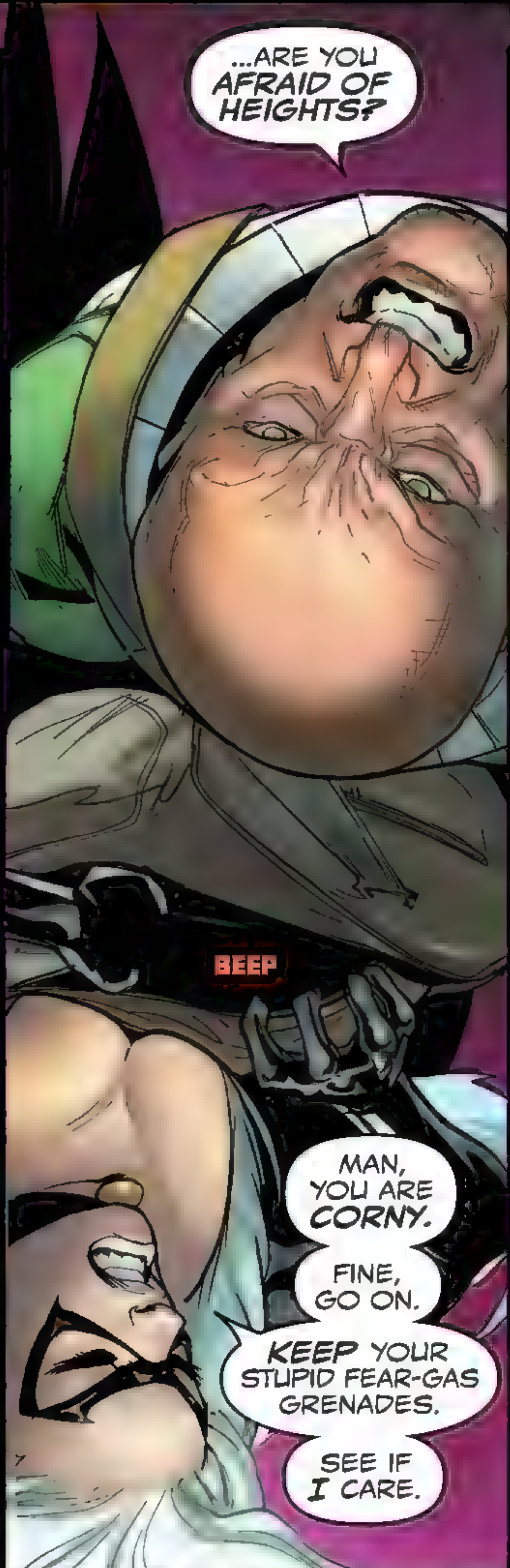
HA!
GOTCHA!

FEH!
YOU'LL
NOT CAPTURE
ME THAT
EASILY!



TELL
ME, *BLACK
CAT*...

YEEP!



...ARE YOU
AFRAID OF
HEIGHTS?

BEEP

MAN,
YOU ARE
CORN.

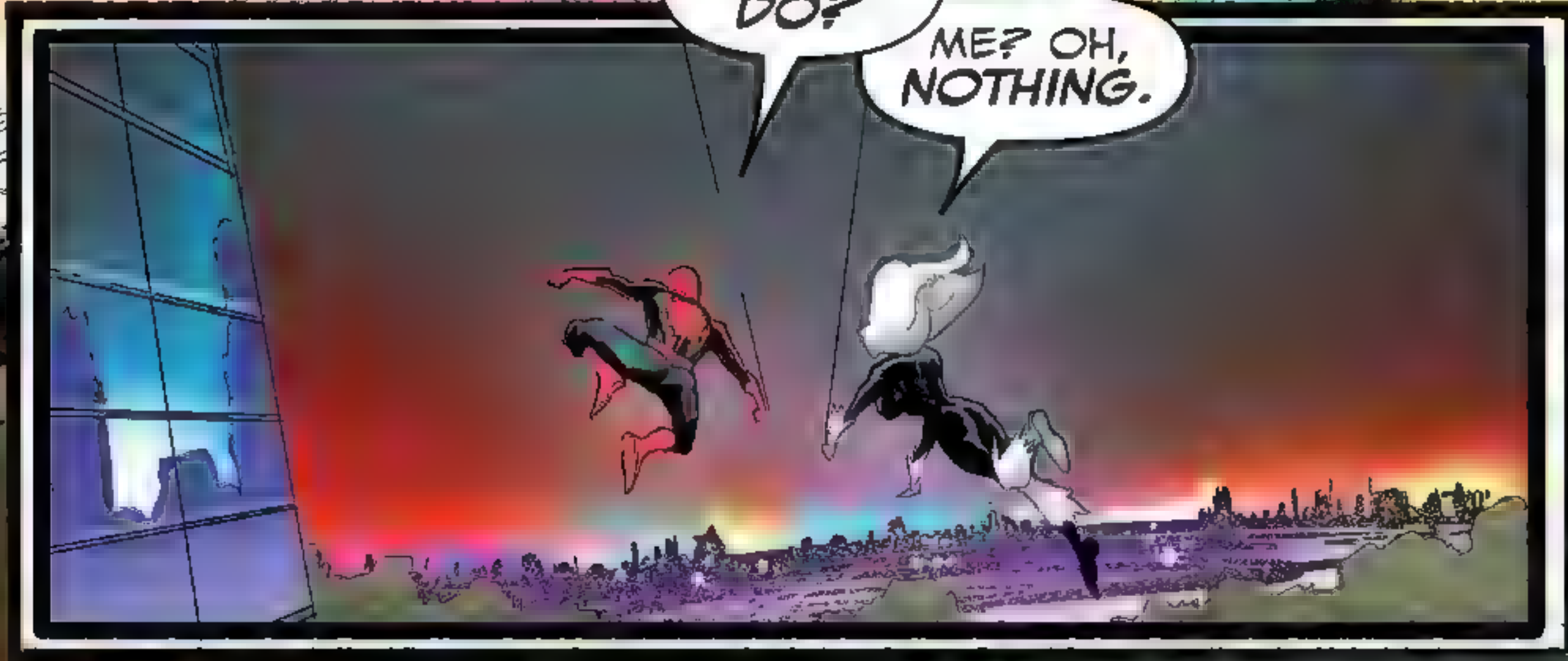
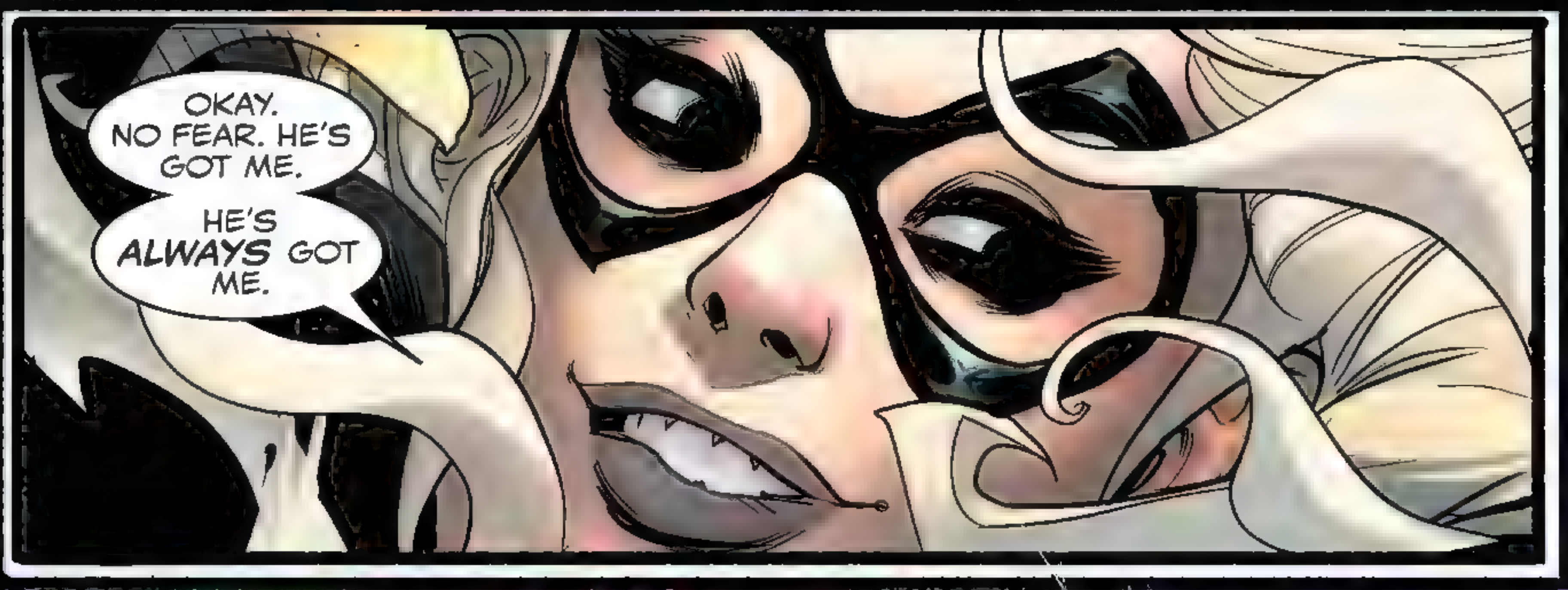
FINE,
GO ON.

KEEP YOUR
STUPID FEAR-GAS
GRENADES.

SEE IF
I CARE.



HAHA!
THE
VULTURE
RULES THE
SKIES!



Later.

BUT I
ALREADY ATE
SUSHI TODAY! AND
THIS TIME IN
ASTORIA NO
LESS!

QUIT YOUR
MOANING. I
PAID FOR IT,
DIDN'T I?

LORD, MY
MERCURY LEVELS
ARE GOING TO BE
THROUGH THE
ROOF.

LOOK, I'VE
BEEN MEANING
TO ASK, AND THIS
IS AS GOOD AN
OPPORTUNITY
AS ANY:

WHAT
ARE YOU UP
TO?

WHY,
WHATEVER
DO YOU
MEAN?

FELICIA,

WHAT

ARE

YOU

UP TO?





FIRST I
HEAR THAT
SILVER SABLE
BROKE INTO DOCTOR
STRANGE'S
PAD--

WOW, YOU
THINK YOU KNOW
SOMEONE--

--THEN I
HEAR THAT
YOU WERE AT THE
**FANTASTIC
FOUR'S**
PLACE--

AND
STOPPED AN ALIEN
INVASION.

--THEN **DANNY
RAND** TELLS ME
YOU BROKE INTO HIS
BUILDING, WITH THE
BEETLE--

I
DIDN'T **STEAL**
ANYTHING--

--AND THEN,
TONY STARK
COMES TO ME
ALL IN A LATHER,
WANTING TO
KNOW ABOUT
YOU!

WHAT CAN
I SAY? I'M AN
IT GIRL.



AND YOUR
CREW, FROM THE
MAGGIA WEDDING?
THEY **BEAT ME UP**
ONE TIME, BACK
WHEN **WE** FIRST
MET!

WAIT,
SERIOUSLY?

I THOUGHT
THEY WERE
LYING...



SPIDERS
THAT EAT
BIRDS!

SPIDERS
THAT EAT
BIRDS!

**CATS AND
SPIDERS THAT
EAT BIRDS!**

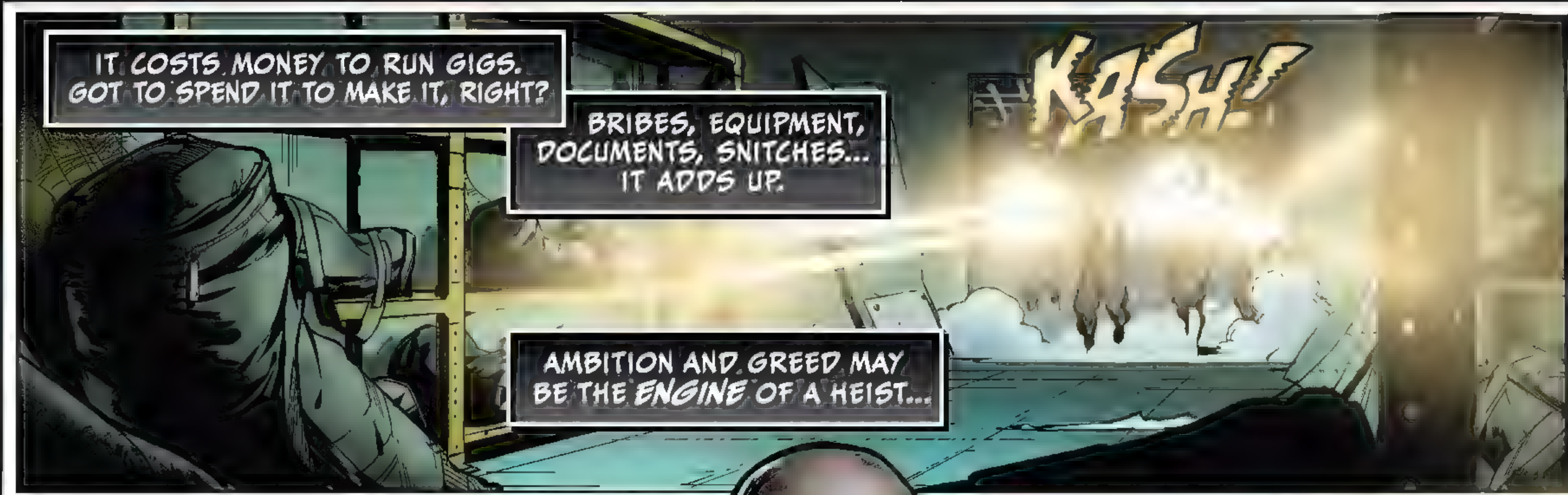






MONEY.

**OPERATIONAL
FUNDS.**



**IT COSTS MONEY TO RUN GIGS.
GOT TO SPEND IT TO MAKE IT, RIGHT?**

**BRIBES, EQUIPMENT,
DOCUMENTS, SNITCHES...
IT ADDS UP.**

**AMBITION AND GREED MAY
BE THE ENGINE OF A HEIST...**



**...BUT MONEY
IS THE FUEL.**

AND NOT JUST
FOR THIEVES
LIKE US, EITHER.

OUTFITS LIKE S.H.I.E.L.D. THREW
BLACK MONEY--UNTRACEABLE,
LAUNDERED CASH--AROUND LIKE IT
WAS CANDY FOR THE SAME REASONS.



AND WITH S.H.I.E.L.D.
GONE, WORD ON
THE STREETS HAS IT
THAT THERE'S STILL
CACHES OF THE
STUFF ALL OVER IN
FORGOTTEN DROPS.

PROBLEM IS,
I DON'T KNOW
WHERE TO
FIND THEM.

BUT
SOMEONE
DOES.



AND WITH THE CITY IN
EVACUATION, IT'S THE
PERFECT TIME FOR
THEM TO GO FOR IT.

S.H.I.E.L.D. EVEN LEFT BEHIND THE
PERFECT GETAWAY ROUTE: A
SECRET HIGHWAY SYSTEM
DEEP BELOW MANHATTAN.





WHICH MAKES SOMEONE
THE PERFECT TARGET.

SO HOW DO YOU
SNEAK UP ON A
VEHICLE MOVING
THROUGH A SECRET
UNDERGROUND
TUNNEL?

I'M GLAD
YOU ASKED.



WHAT?!

HE WASN'T
USING IT.

IT WAS JUST
SITTING THERE!

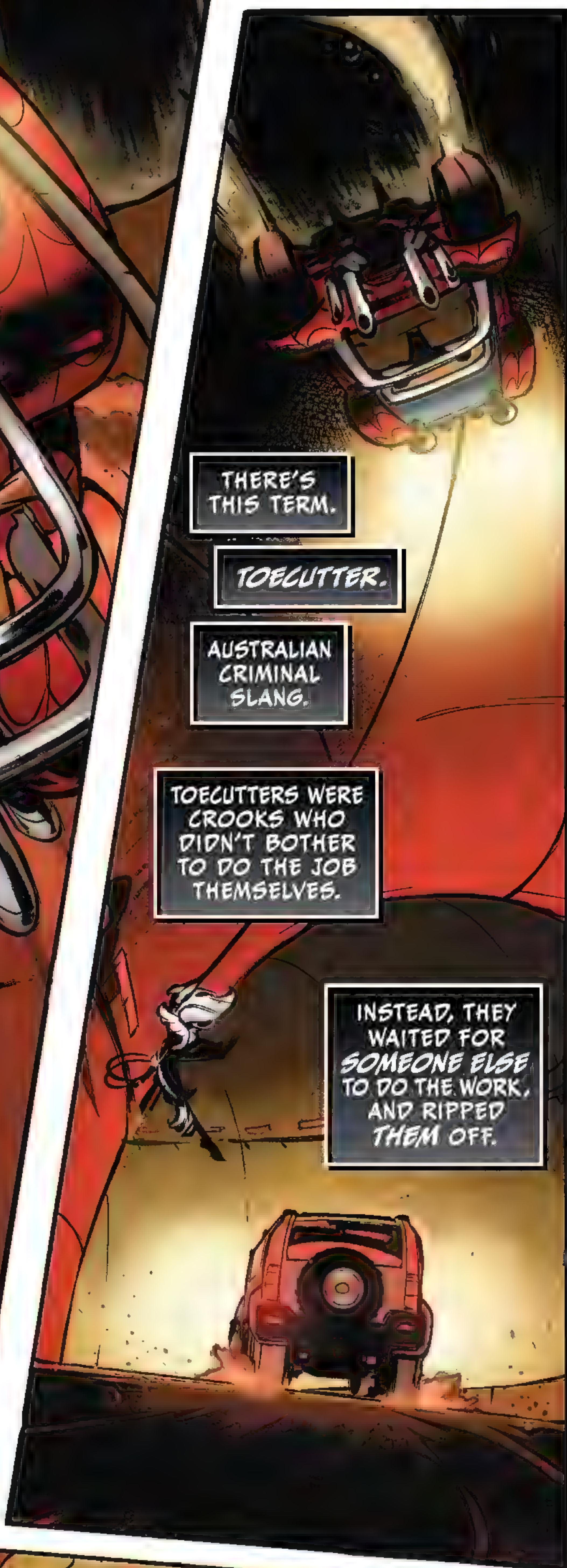
THERE'S
THIS TERM.

TOECUTTER.

AUSTRALIAN
CRIMINAL
SLANG.

TOECUTTERS WERE
CROOKS WHO
DIDN'T BOTHER
TO DO THE JOB
THEMSELVES.

INSTEAD, THEY
WAITED FOR
SOMEONE ELSE
TO DO THE WORK,
AND RIPPED
THEM OFF.



WHICH IS
EXACTLY WHAT
WE'RE DOING
HERE.

EASY
PICKINGS--



12:37 A.M.
THE AVENGERS' DEFENSE OF THE EARTH FAILS.
THE KING IN BLACK DESCENDS.



UmmNGHHhh!





YOU'RE STAYING HERE?
ARE YOU INSANE?

OR DID YOU HIT YOUR HEAD HARDER THAN WE THOUGHT?

BOTH, PROBABLY.



BUT SOMEONE OR SOMETHING MESSED UP MY JOB.

AND I DON'T LET ANYONE DO THAT AND GET AWAY WITHOUT SO MUCH AS A BLACK EYE OR A BLOODY NOSE.



THERE WAS AN EVACUATION ORDER FOR NEW YORK.

BUT THERE'S ALWAYS AN EVACUATION ORDER FOR NEW YORK.

IT'S LIKE FIRE DRILLS. YOU DON'T EXPECT IT TO ACTUALLY MATTER.



THERE WAS JUST AN ALIEN INVASION. THE AVENGERS STOPPED IT.

THAT'S HOW IT WORKS. THE AVENGERS ALWAYS STOP THEM.



YOU GET USED TO IT.

YOU STOP ASKING THE QUESTION--



"WHAT IF THEY DIDN'T?"

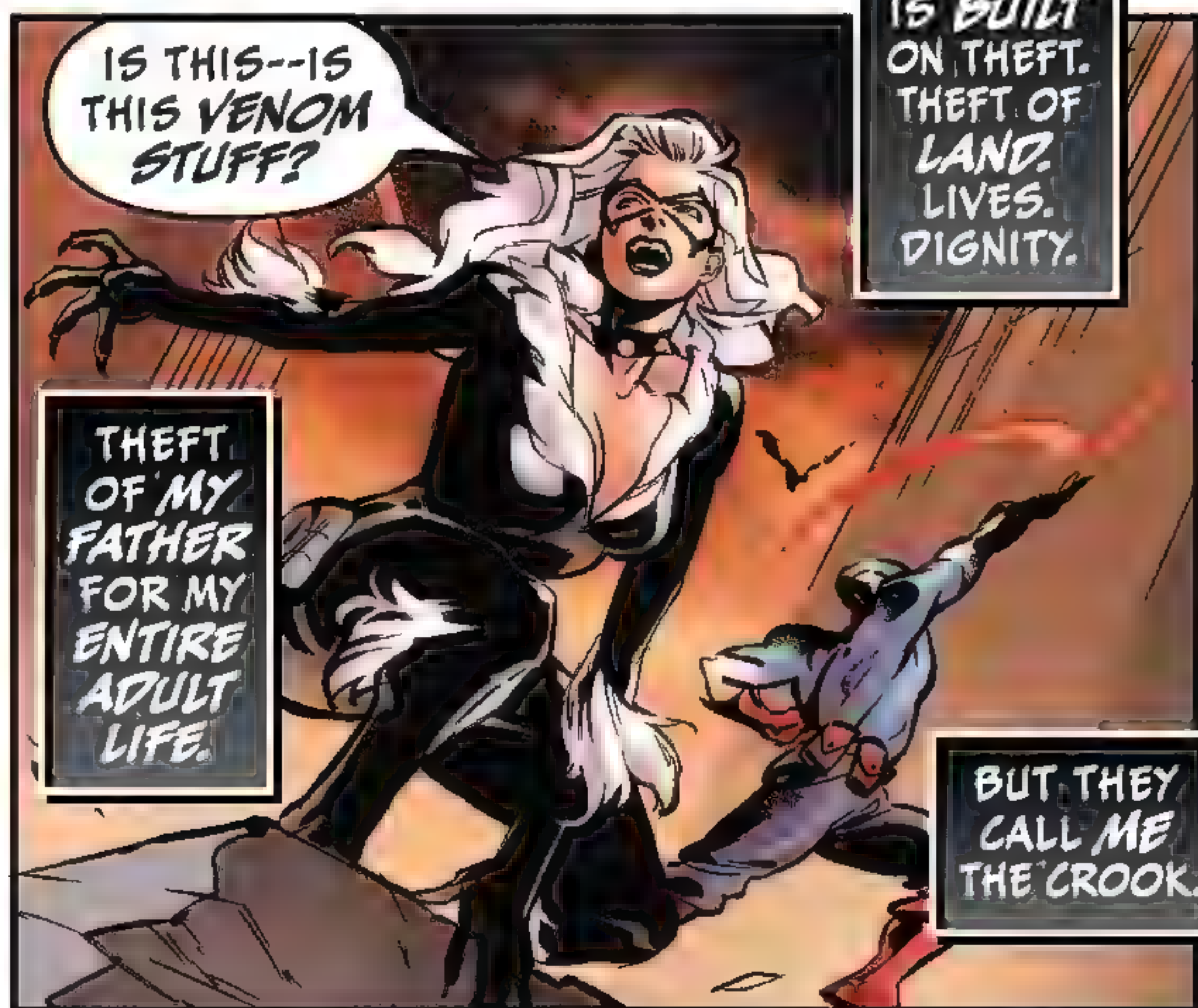


WHAT THEN?

GET THOSE CIVILIANS INTO THE QUINJET! PUSH BACK THE SYMBIOTES, I DON'T CARE HOW YOU DO IT!

SYMBIOTES?!

I DON'T BELIEVE IN AMERICA. NEVER HAVE.



IS THIS--IS THIS VENOM STUFF?

AMERICA IS BUILT ON THEFT. THEFT OF LAND. LIVES. DIGNITY.

THEFT OF MY FATHER FOR MY ENTIRE ADULT LIFE.

BUT THEY CALL ME THE 'CROOK.



HI, YOU PROBABLY DON'T REMEMBER, BUT WE MET BEFORE--

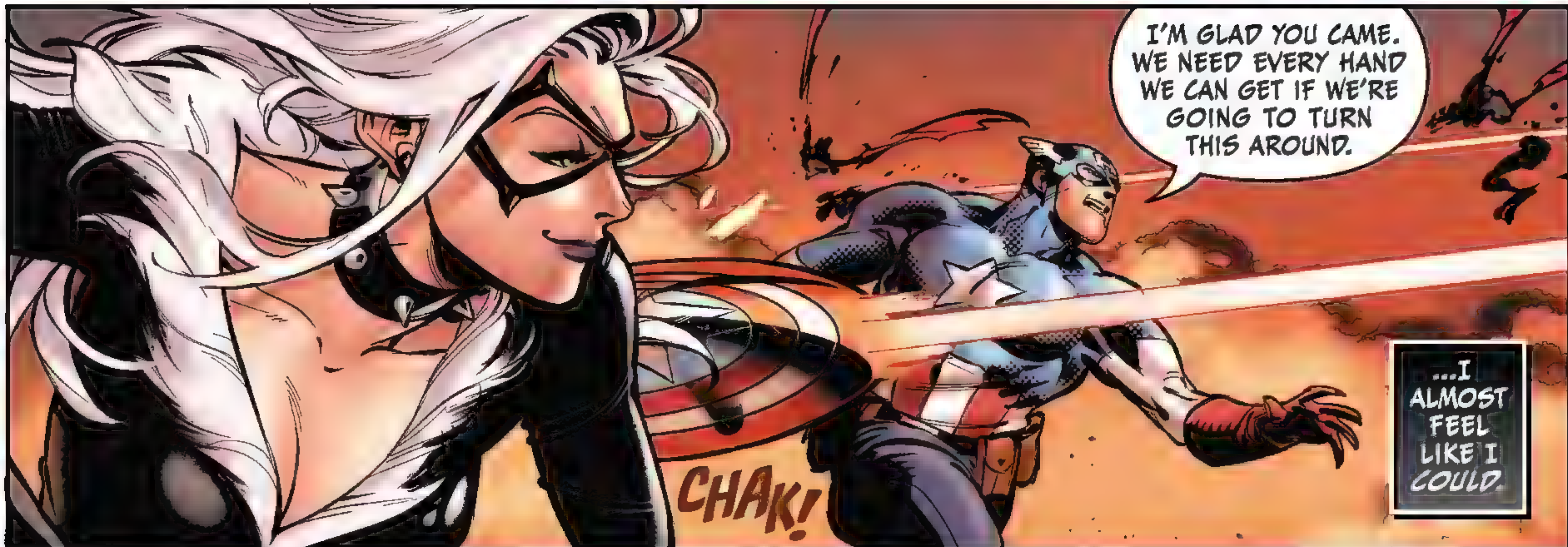
YOU'RE FELICIA HARDY. THE BLACK CAT?

SPIDER-MAN'S TALKED ABOUT YOU.

HE HAS?

I DON'T BELIEVE IN AMERICA.

BUT SEEING HIM, HEARING HIM TALK...



I'M GLAD YOU CAME. WE NEED EVERY HAND WE CAN GET IF WE'RE GOING TO TURN THIS AROUND.

...I ALMOST FEEL LIKE I COULD.



Uh, NO
PROB.

WE ARE
GOING TO TURN
THIS AROUND,
RIGHT?

LIKE,
YOU GOT
THIS?

WE'RE
ON THE
BACK FOOT,
I'M NOT
GOING TO
LIE.

BUT WE'VE
BROUGHT THE
BIGGEST GUNS
WE HAVE.



WE HAVE
THE WORLD'S
*SORCERER
SUPREME*
AND
THE X-MEN ON
OUR SIDE.

WE HAVE TO
TRUST IN THEIR END,
SO FOLKS LIKE US CAN
KEEP THE CIVILIANS
SAFE.

RIGHT.

EARTH'S
MIGHTIEST
MERLIN.



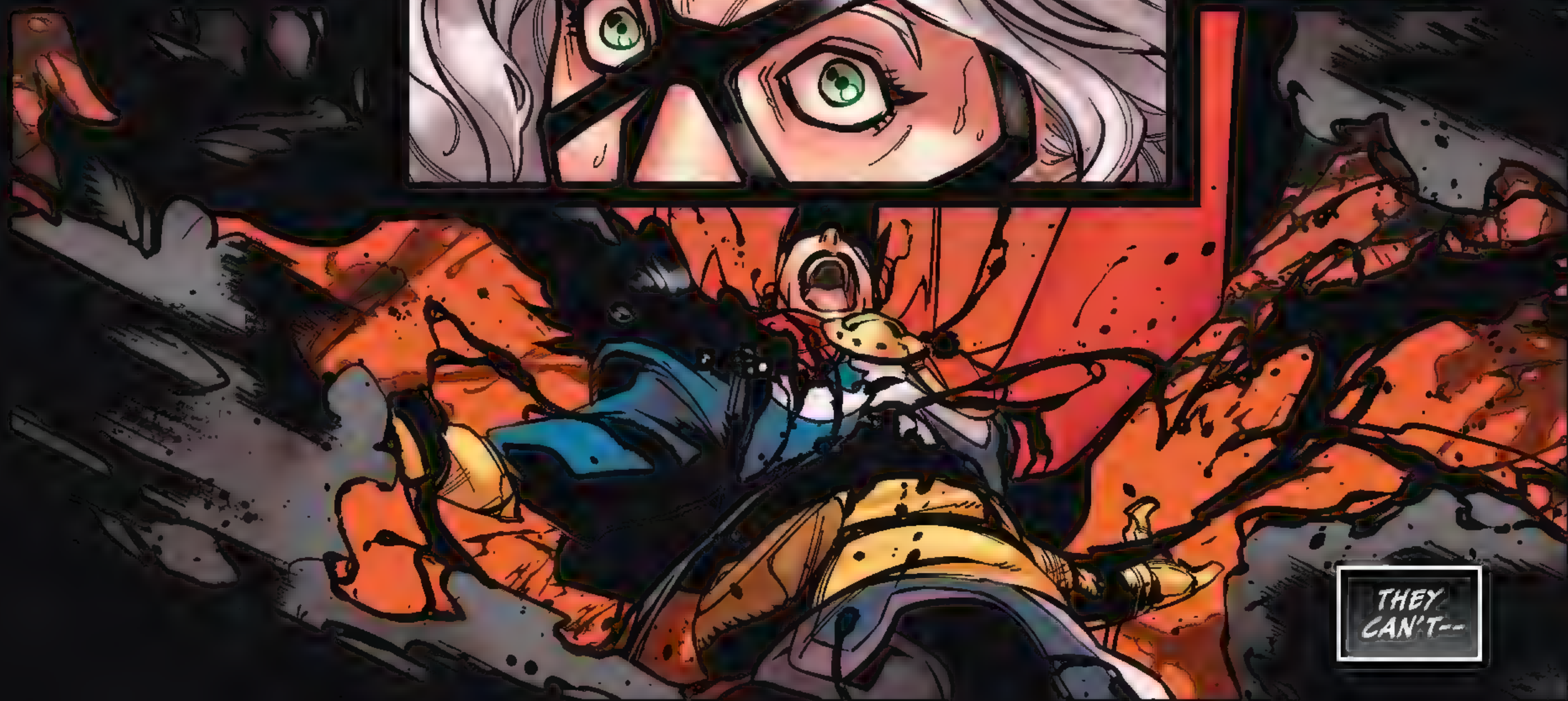
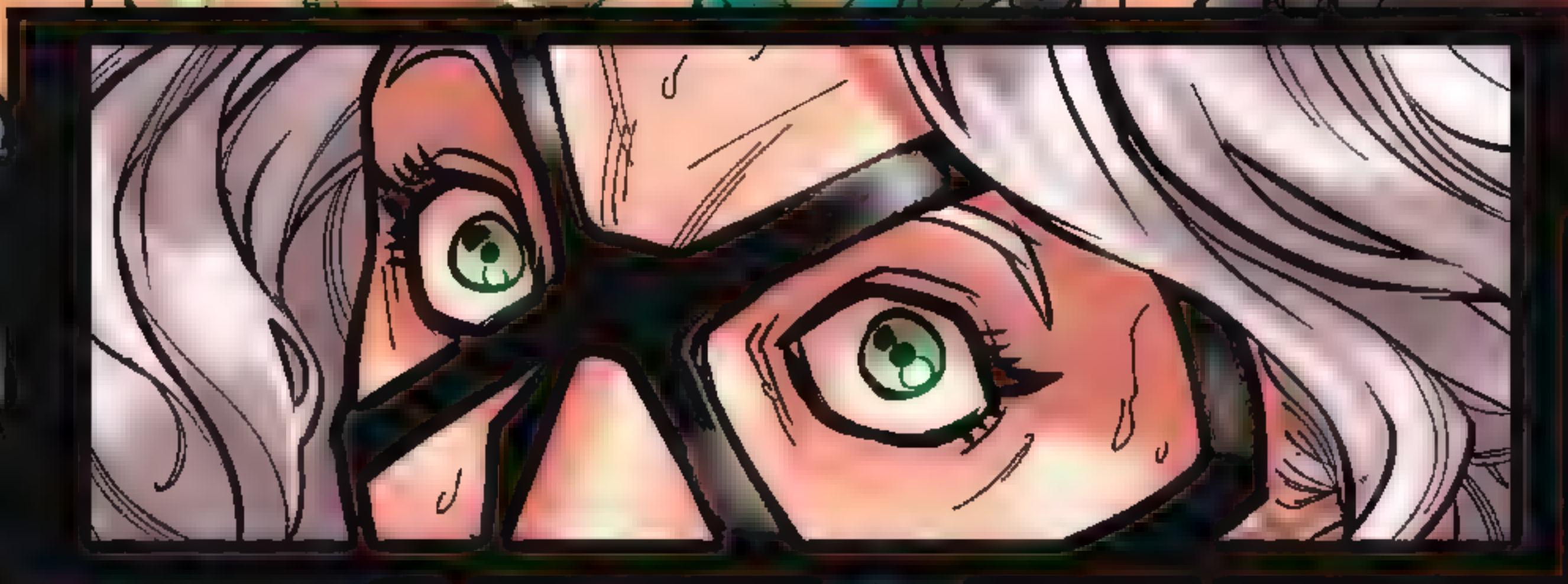
LOOK
AT HIM.

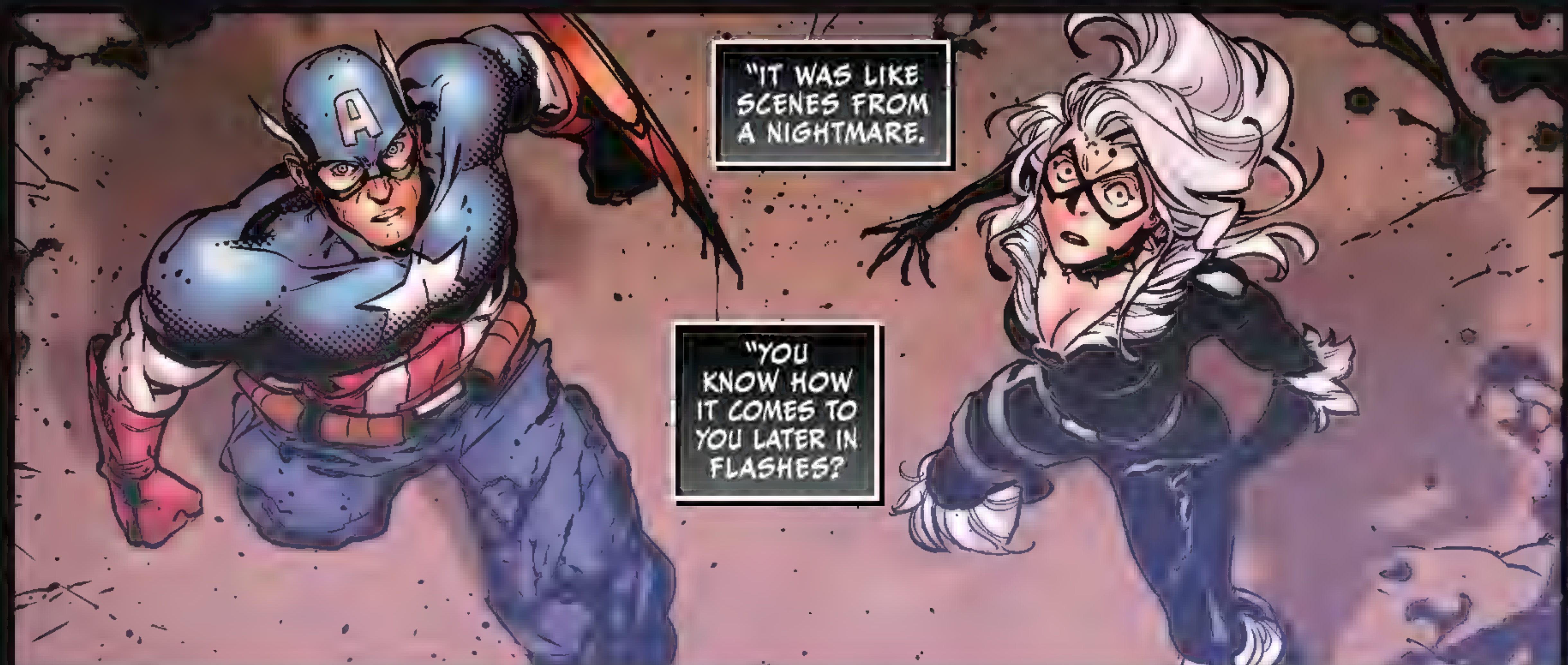
THE POWER.

PROBABLY BEST
HE DOESN'T
NOTICE ME AS
I ROBBED HIM
RECENTLY.

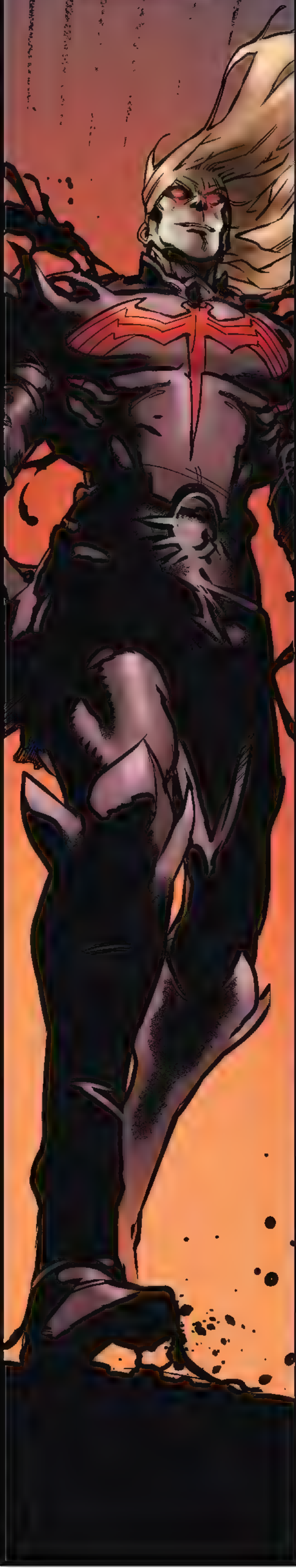
TWICE.

WAIT--

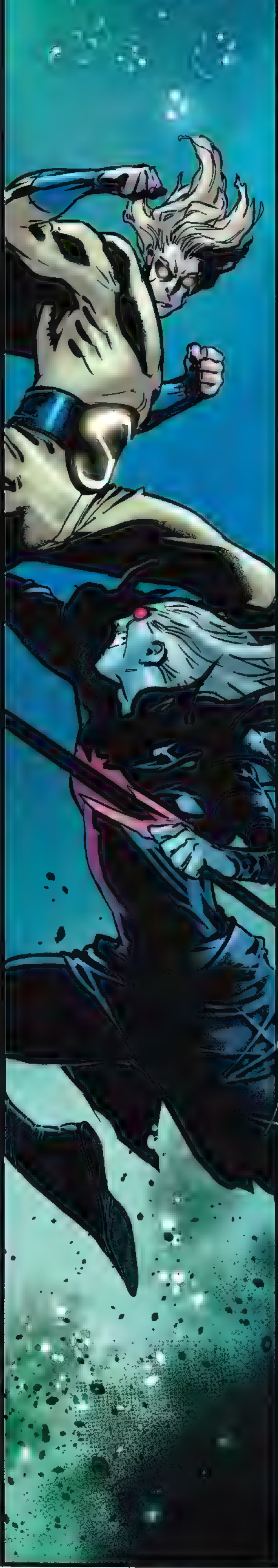




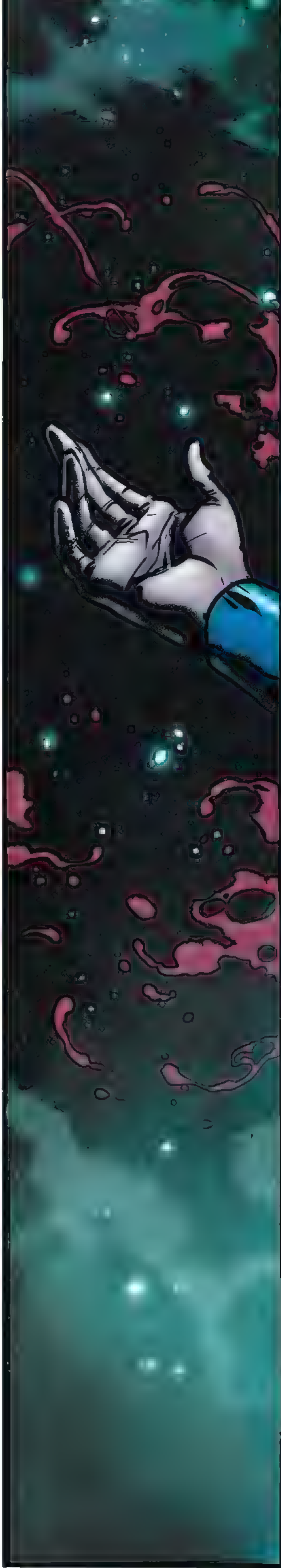
"THE DEVIL
HIMSELF
APPEARED."



"A GOD OF
LIGHT CAME
TO OUR AID..."

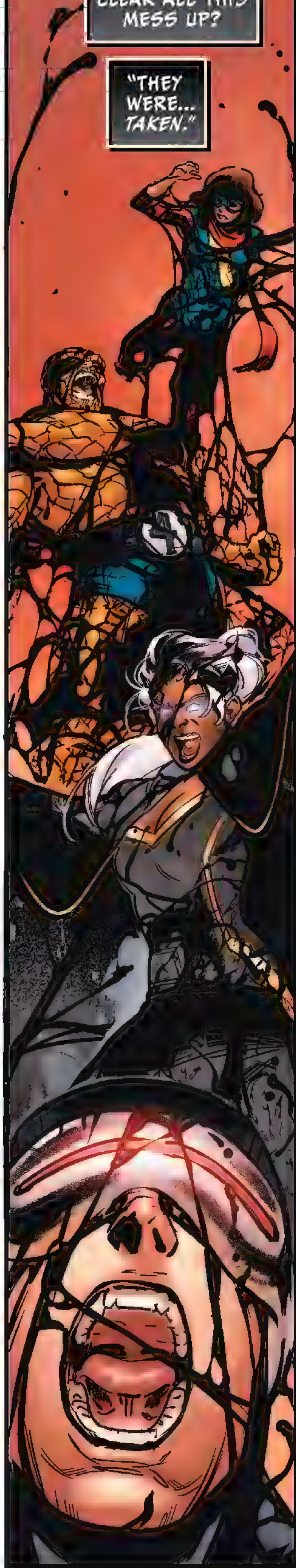


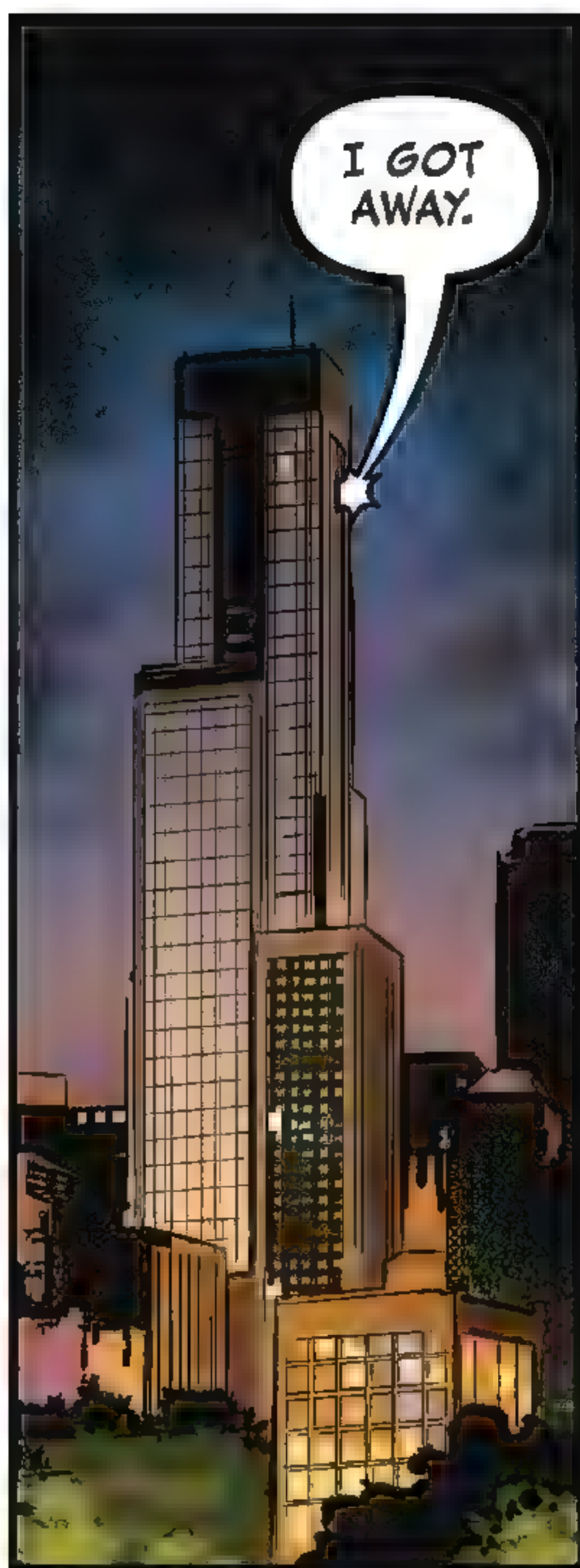
"...AND WAS
TORN APART."



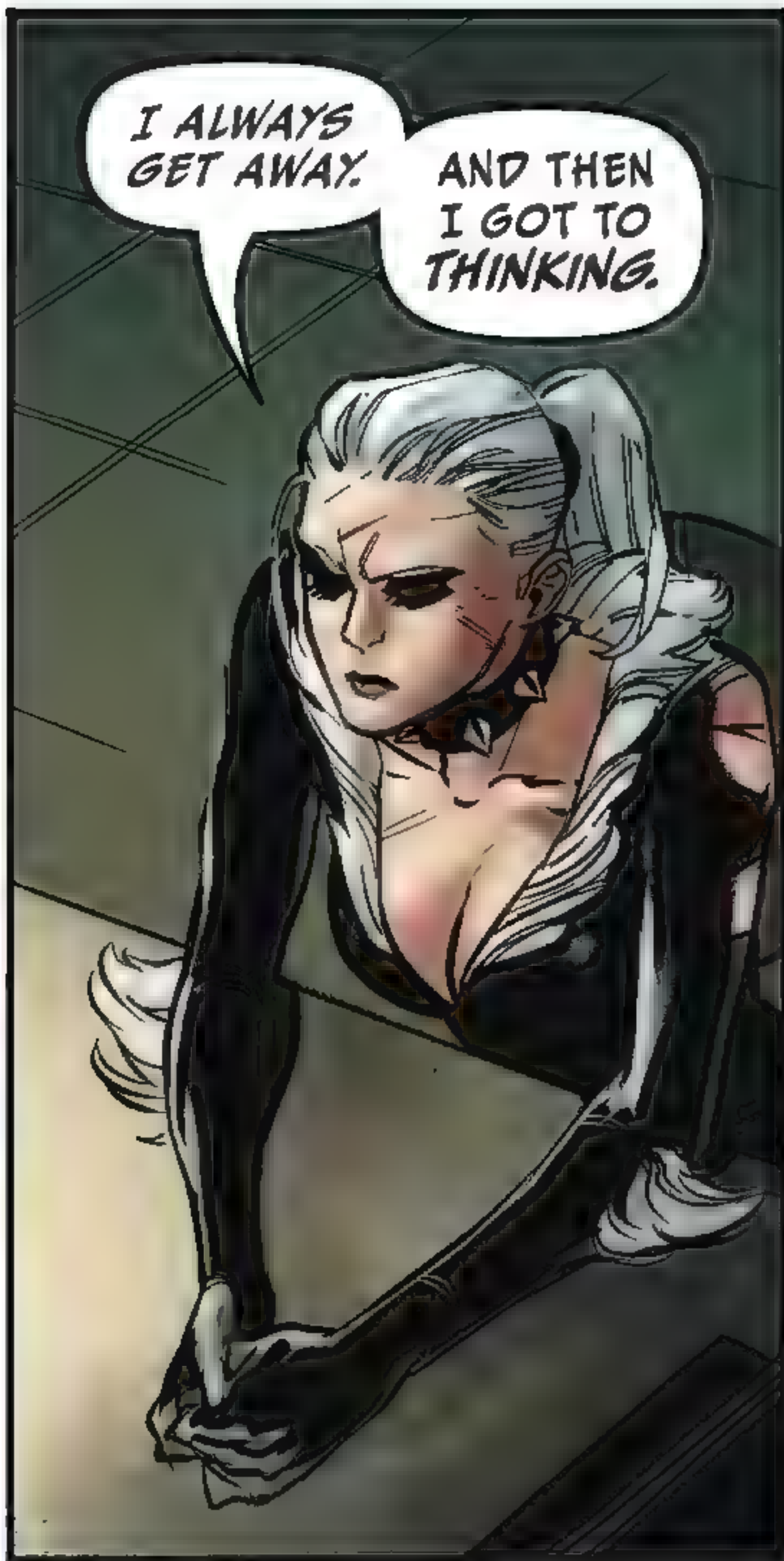
"AND OUR
HEROES, THE
ONES WHO WERE
SUPPOSED TO
CLEAR ALL THIS
MESS UP?"

"THEY
WERE...
TAKEN."





I GOT AWAY.



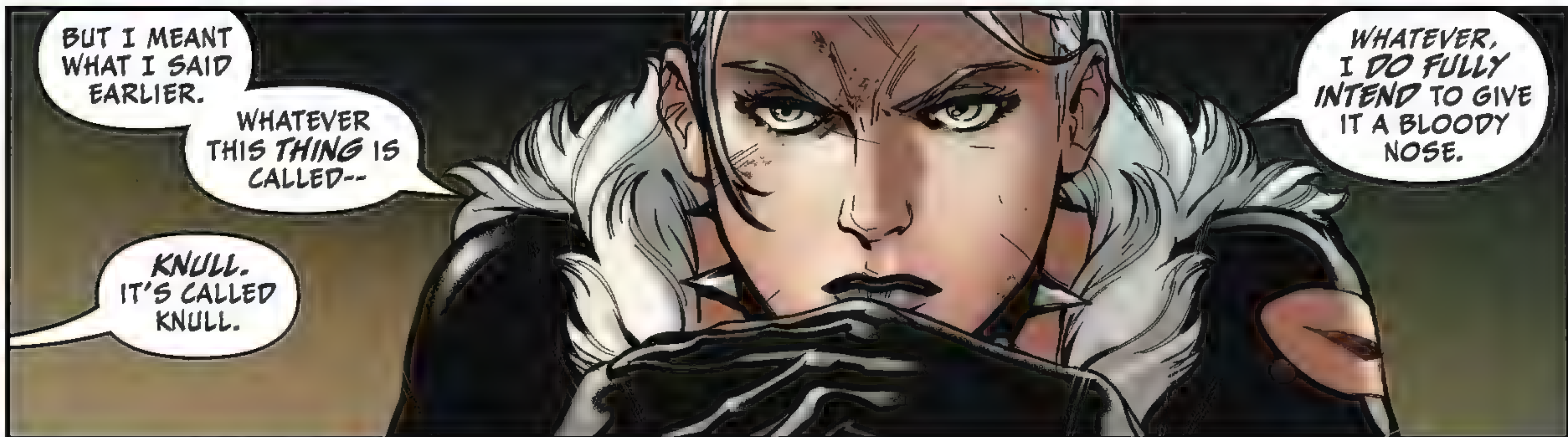
I ALWAYS GET AWAY.

AND THEN I GOT TO THINKING.



THIS IS ABOVE MY PAY GRADE. THIS IS NOT THE KIND OF THING ME AND MY BOYS HANDLE.

WE'RE NOT WORLD-BEATERS. WE'RE NOT COSMIC WHOZITS. WE'RE THIEVES. WE *STEAL* THINGS.



BUT I MEANT WHAT I SAID EARLIER.

WHATEVER THIS *THING* IS CALLED--

KNULL. IT'S CALLED *KNULL*.

WHATEVER, I DO FULLY INTEND TO GIVE IT A BLOODY NOSE.



WHICH BRINGS US HERE, TO JOLLY OLDE *ALCHEMAX*.

YOUR SECURITY LOCKDOWN PROTOCOLS COULD USE SOME WORK, BY THE WAY.

AND THE ONE PERSON I KNOW WHO KNOWS HOW TO *HURT* ALL THIS SYMBIOTE STUFF.

HIYA, *DR. STEVE*. IT'S BEEN A WHILE.



DR. STEVE? WHAT, DO YOU HAVE ONLY *ONE* NAME? LIKE *CHER*?

YES, "DR. KORPSE," I DO.

Hmm. FAIR.



A PLEASURE
TO SEE YOU
AGAIN, MS.
HARDY.

FIRST
EDWARD COMES
TO WARN ME ABOUT
THE COMING DANGER,
AND NOW **YOU** PAY
ME A VISIT.

PLEASE
CATCH ME UP, ARE
YOU STILL CURRENTLY
A **CRIME BOSS**? OR
A **VIGILANTE** NOW?
VILLAIN?

YOU PEOPLE
MAKE IT SO
HARD TO KEEP
TRACK.

CUTE,
COMING FROM
VENOM'S BEST
FRIEND.



EDWARD
BROCK IS A
HERO.

HE IS A MAN,
JUST A MAN,
BESET BY
COSMIC
FORCES--



SPARE ME THE
HAGIOGRAPHY. **BROCK'S**
A **DANGEROUS LOSER**,
NOTHING MORE.

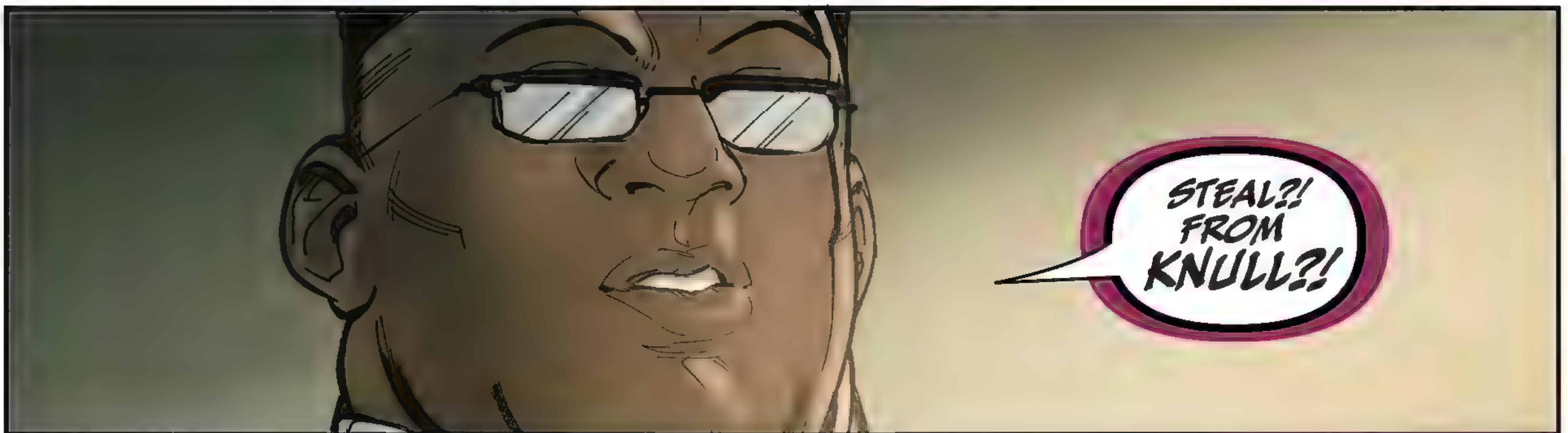
WHAT
I NEED TO
KNOW IS, ARE
YOU PART OF
THE **CREW**
OR NOT?



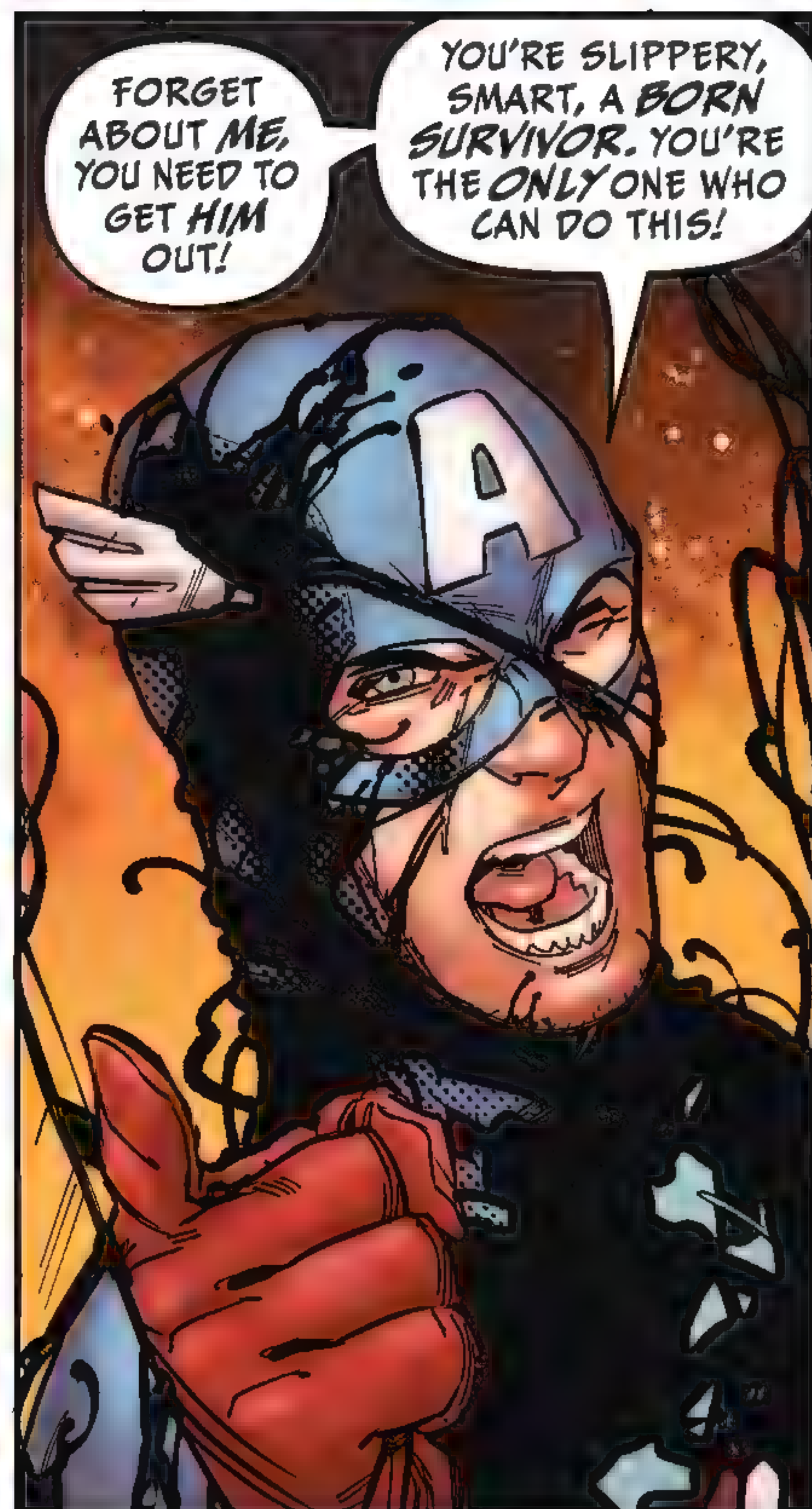
CREW? WHY IN THE
WORLD WOULD I JOIN
YOUR CREW?

BECAUSE
WE **NEED** YOU,
DR. **STEVE**.

BECAUSE
WE'RE GOING TO GO
OUT THERE AND GIVE
THIS **KNULL** A BLACK
EYE BY RUNNING A
JOB ON HIM.



**STEAL?!
FROM
KNULL?!**





THAT'S AN ORDER!

FALL BACK, REGROUP, THEN FIND A WAY TO BREAK HIM OUT!



THE WORLD NEEDS HIM MORE THAN US!



LIKE I SAID.

WE'RE NOT WORLD-BEATERS. WE'RE NOT COSMIC WHOZITS.





"THERE IT IS."

"DOCTOR STRANGE'S PRISON, STUCK ON THE TOP OF THE CHRYSLER BUILDING LIKE AN EVIL BOWLING TROPHY."



"NO BIG DEAL. JUST A COUPLE TONS OF ALIEN SLIME BETWEEN US AND THE BIG-TIME MERLIN."

WELL...

...I GUESS WE'RE NOT GETTING ANY YOUNGER.

SADDLE UP, BOYS. AND LET'S HOPE WE LIVE TO GET OLDER.



ALCHEMAX. TWO HOURS AGO.



I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT YOU REALLY THINK THIS CAN BE DONE.

DR. STEVE, LET ME LIST THE PEOPLE I'VE RIPPED OFF IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS.



DOCTOR STRANGE.

REED RICHARDS.

DANNY RAND (THE IRON FIST).

KADE KILGORE.

TONY STARK.

NEED I GO ON?



YOU THINK I'M GOING TO BAT AN EYE AT RUNNING GAME ON SOME GOOFY ALIEN SPACE GOD?

ANY SAFE CAN BE CRACKED.

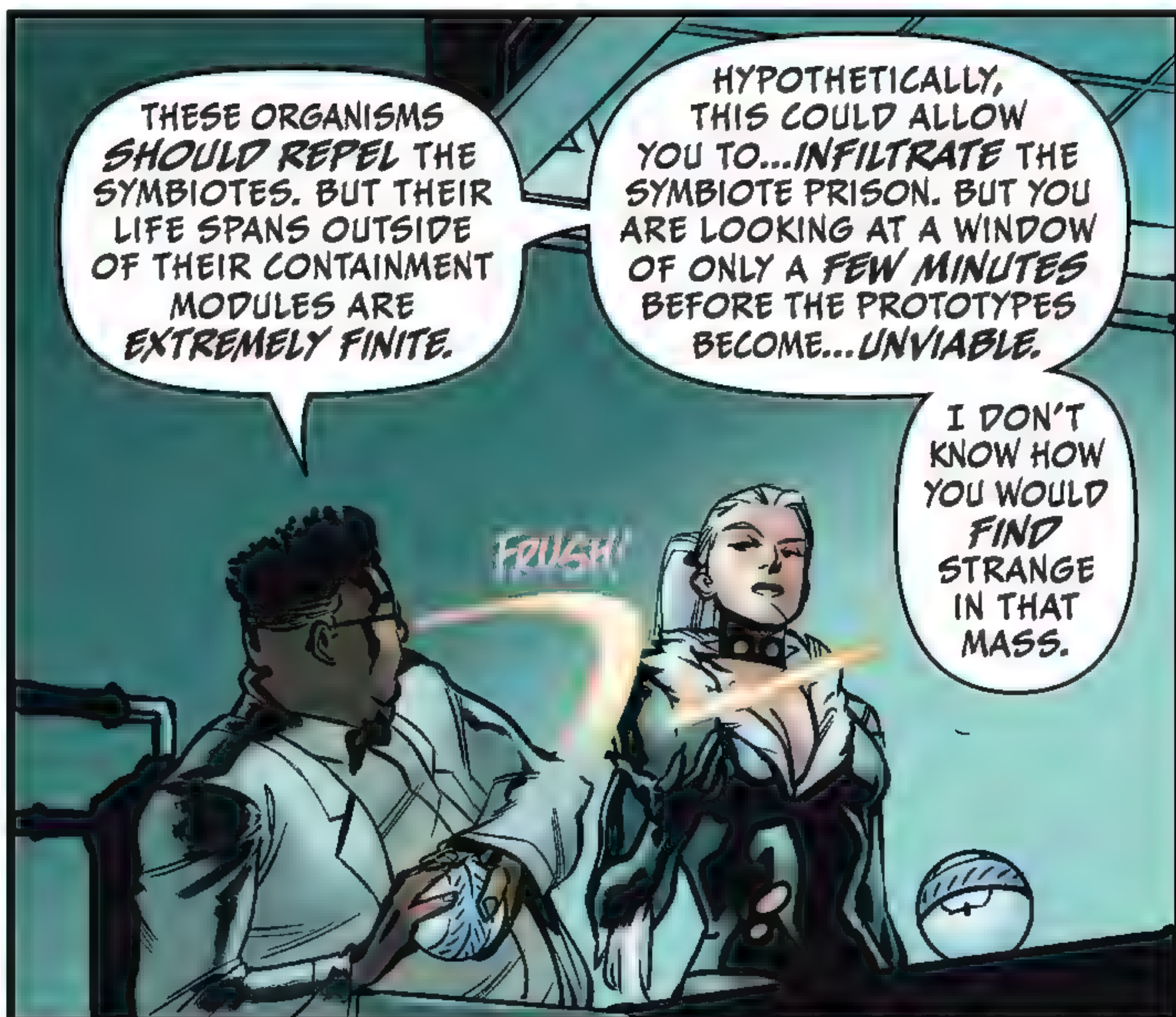
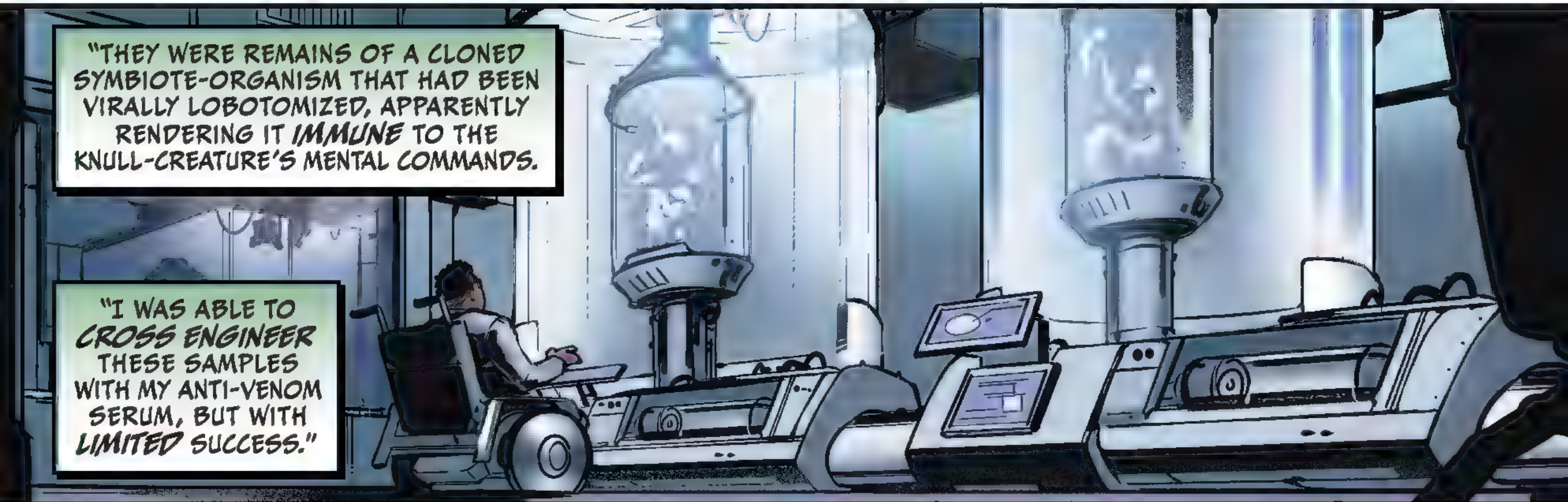
IT JUST COMES DOWN TO INFORMATION, EQUIPMENT, SKILL...

...AND LUCK.



WE'VE GOT ABOUT AS MUCH INFORMATION AS WE CAN HOPE FOR, THE SKILL, AND HOPEFULLY THE LUCK.

WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR US EQUIPMENT-WISE?





OH BOY!
BACK ON THE
CREW!

WELCOME
BACK, BABY.

SORRY IF
WE GOT YOU
INTO TROUBLE
LAST TIME.

THE DOC
WAS NOT
HAPPY.

BUT
WE'LL CALL IT
SQUARE WHEN WE
GET HIM OUT.



NOT A
WORD.

DIDN'T SAY
NOTHIN'.

IT IS PERFECTLY **NORMAL**
TO HAVE FRIENDS! **BATS** IS
AN **EXCELLENT** CHESS PLAYER
AND HAS **MANY** FASCINATING
INSIGHTS INTO THE WORLD
OF THE PARANORMAL.

IT'S FINE,
DOC. I'M
SURE HE'S
MAN'S BEST
FRIEND.
=>Pffftt!<=

THERE!
YOU SEE?
THIS IS WHY
I CAN'T TELL
YOU PEOPLE
ABOUT MY
FRIENDS!



SO YOU
WITH ME,
BATS?

WHEN WE GET OVER THERE,
I NEED YOU TO DO YOUR
GHOST THING, PHASE
THROUGH THERE AND
FIND STRANGE.

YOU LEAD ME
TO HIM, AND
THEN WE GET
HIM OUT.



AND AFTER THAT...ARE
YOU SURE THIS **GIMMICK**
WILL **JUICE HIM UP**? GIVE
HIM THE **POWER** HE'S
GOING TO NEED?

I THINK
SO.

I MEAN,
HE USED IT TO CLOCK
LOKI ONE TIME. THERE'S
JUST A PIECE LEFT,
BUT IT **STINKS** OF
POWER.

GOOD
ENOUGH
FOR ME.

DOC, BRUNO,
IS OUR LATEST
TOY READY?

GREEN ACROSS
THE BOARD, BOSS. IT'S A
LITTLE OLD, BUT IT SHOULD
HOLD TOGETHER FOR AS
LONG AS YOU NEED.

COOL.
I CAN'T BELIEVE
THIS WAS JUST
SITTING THERE
AT ALCHEMAX.

DID YOU
KNOW...

"...I'VE ALWAYS
WANTED TO FLY ONE
OF THESE THINGS!"

Arooo!



IF I DIE, AT
LEAST IT'LL BE
HOW I LIVED.



OUTRAGEOUSLY.



NOW,
TO DRESS
FOR THE
OCCASION.





CRAWLING ALL
OVER ME--

--IT'S SO
GROSS--

CHILL,
FELICIA.

JUST
REMEMBER
WHAT DR.
STEVE SAID.

THE SUIT WILL
BREATHE FOR
ME, WILL KEEP
THE SYMBIOTES
OFF ME...

I JUST HAVE
TO LET IT.

BUT I CAN'T
TELL UP
FROM DOWN
IN HERE.
I'M TOTALLY
LOST. AND
IF BATS--

HEY!

I FOUND HIM!
FOLLOW ME!

AAH!

THE SUIT
DOESN'T
LIKE BEING
IN HERE.

IT'S SHUDDERING
FROM THE WAVES
OF HATRED COMING
OFF THE SYMBIOTES
AROUND US.

I'M GETTING
SECONDHAND
GOOSE BUMPS.

IT'S GROSS. BUT
IT'S HOLDING UP.

WE'RE GOING TO
PULL THIS OFF.

AND IF I EVER SEE
EDDIE BROCK
AGAIN, I'M GOING
TO PUNCH HIS
TEETH DOWN
HIS NECK.

BECAUSE I CAN
GUARANTEE
THAT ALL THIS...

...IS HIS FAULT.

THAT
STUPID
SUIT.

I HATE IT.

IT'S BEEN NOTHING BUT GRIEF
FOR *EVERYONE* SINCE SPIDER
BROUGHT IT HERE FROM
WHEREVER HE WENT THAT TIME.

AND I USED TO
LIVE WITH THAT
THING. THINKING
ABOUT IT NOW
STILL GIVES ME
THE SHUDDERS.

VENOM,
CARNAGE,
MANIAC...

ALMOST THERE!
HURRY!

I'M THE
BLACK CAT--
NOT THE BLACK...
I DON'T KNOW...
BADGER.

I'M GOING
AS FAST AS
I CAN.

CAN'T BE A COINCIDENCE THAT
THESE THINGS END UP WITH
STUPID BROKEN LOSERS
LIKE BROCK, KASADY AND
LEE-DAMNED-PRICE.

THERE'S
STRANGE.

THEY'VE GOT
HIM TRUSSED UP
BUT GOOD. KEEPING
HIM FROM SAYING
HIS ABRACADABRAS,
FROM GESTURING
HIS ALAKAZAAMS.

NO ANTI-VENOM
SUIT TO KEEP HIM
SAFE AND SANE.

WELL,
NOT YET.

YOU
BETTER BE
WORTH THE
FAITH CAPTAIN
AMERICA PUT IN
YOU, DOC.

STEPHEN!
WAKE
UP!

SUIT'S NOT
DOING GREAT.

GETTING
HARDER TO
BREATHE.

IT WAS NEVER
GOING TO SURVIVE
LONG, AND THE
PSYCHIC ATTACK
FROM ALL AROUND
ISN'T HELPING.

GOTTA
GET
GONE.

OKAY...
HERE WE
GO...

⇒Wheeze⇒

GET
READY,
BATS...

THIS IS
PROBABLY
GOING TO GO
REAL WILD
IN A MINUTE...

SCHLUP
PPP

THAT'S
DONE IT.

hiss!

KICKED THE
HORNET'S NEST.

BATS!

=Wheeze=

LEAD
US--

=Heff=

--OUT OF
HERE!

THAT'S THE THING
ABOUT CRACKING A
SAFE THAT'S ALIVE...

WHOAA!

...IT TENDS
TO TAKE IT
PERSONAL.

BUT LIKE ANY DATE
GONE SOUR, YOU
MAKE SURE TO HAVE
AN EXIT STRATEGY...

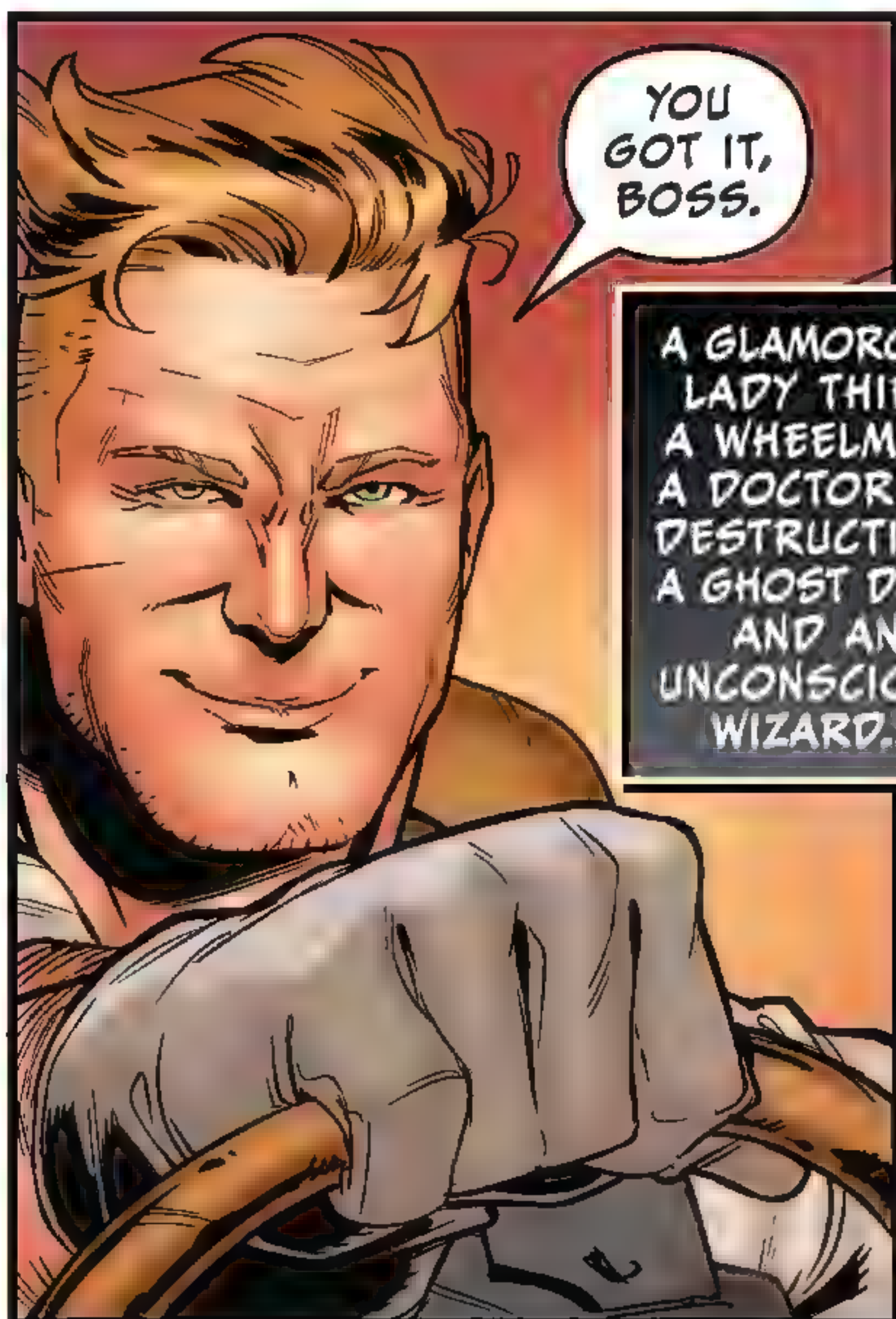
WHOOOF!

YO!
TAXI!

...PREFERABLY
A FAST CAR.

GOTCHA,
BOSS!

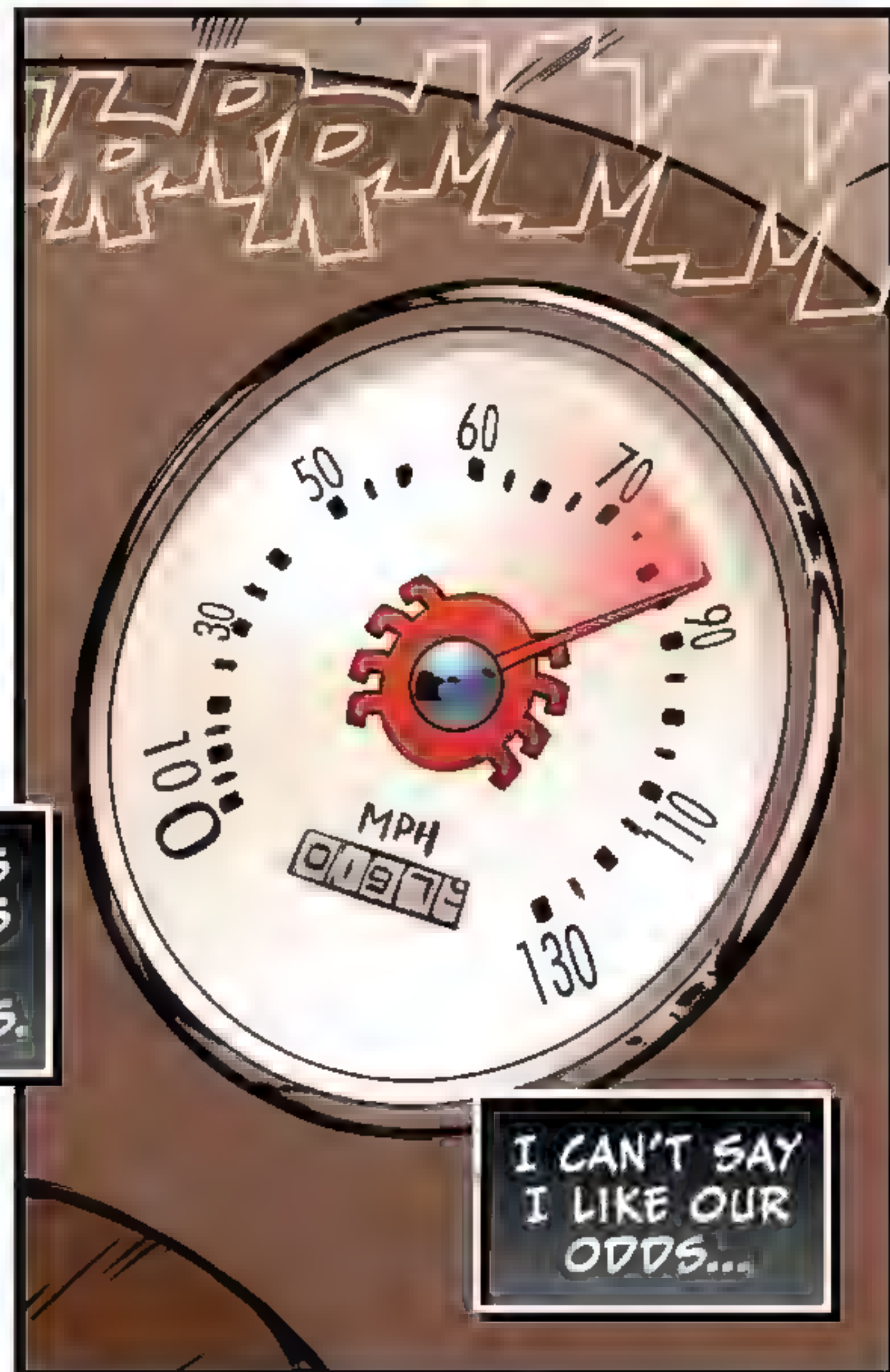
WHOOO!



A GLAMOROUS
LADY THIEF,
A WHEELMAN,
A DOCTOR OF
DESTRUCTION,
A GHOST DOG,
AND AN
UNCONSCIOUS
WIZARD...



...VERSUS
ENDLESS
ALIEN
DRAGONS.





...BUT THEY'RE THE
BEST ONES
WE'RE GOING TO GET.

WATCH
YOUR
EYES!

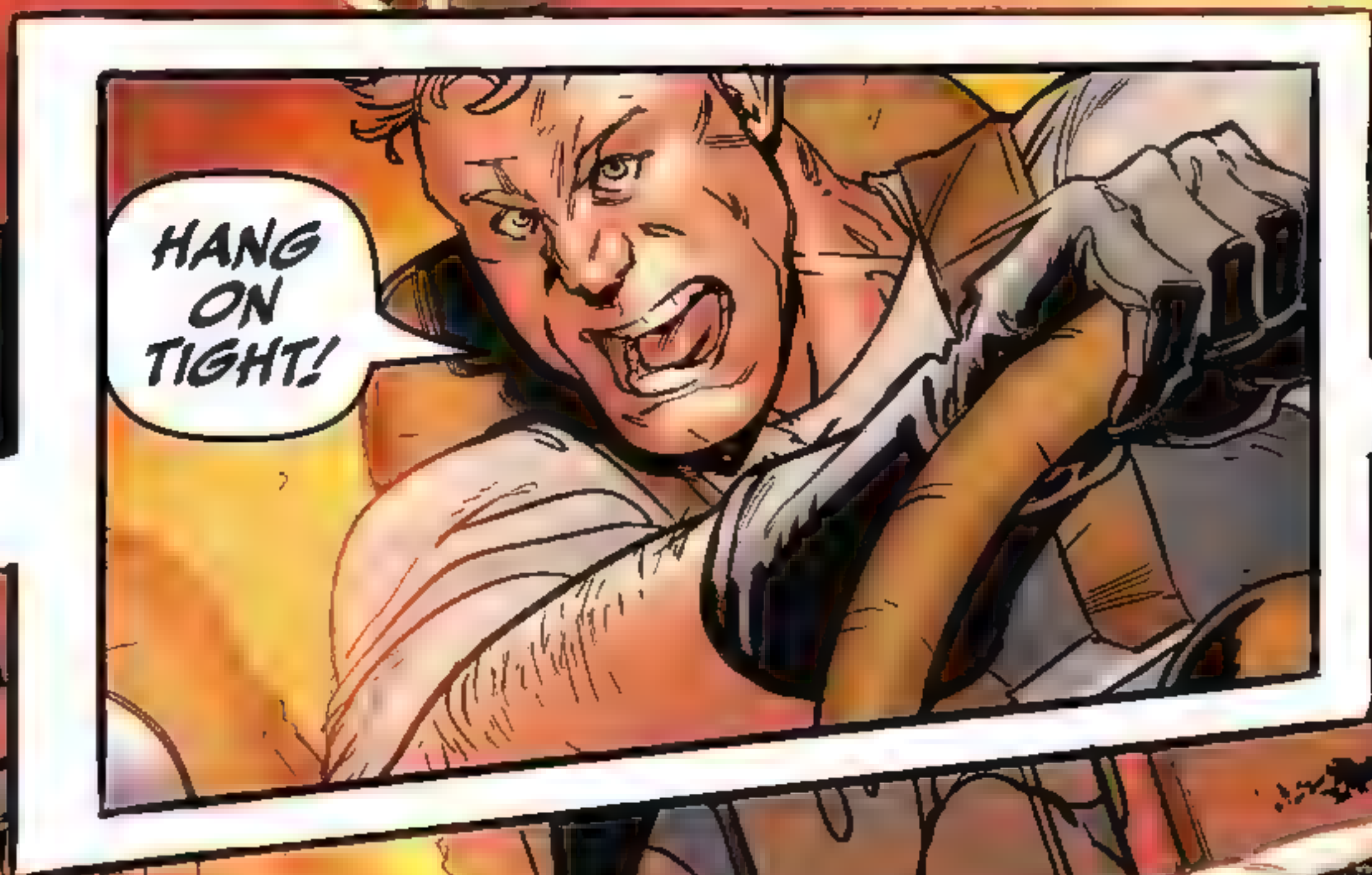


AND NOTHING
EVENS ODDS
LIKE DOC'S
HOME-COOKED
EXPLOSIVES.



DR. STEVE
SAID THEY
DON'T LIKE
LIGHT.

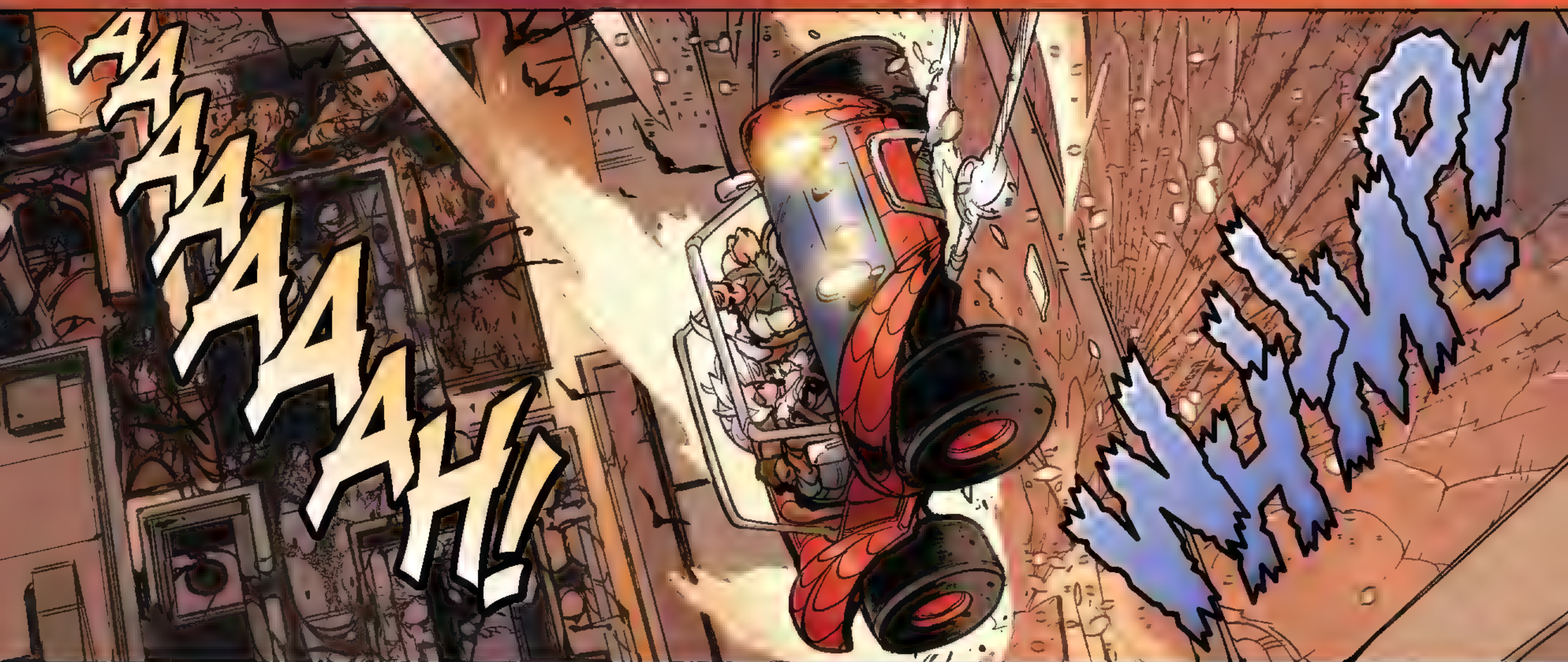
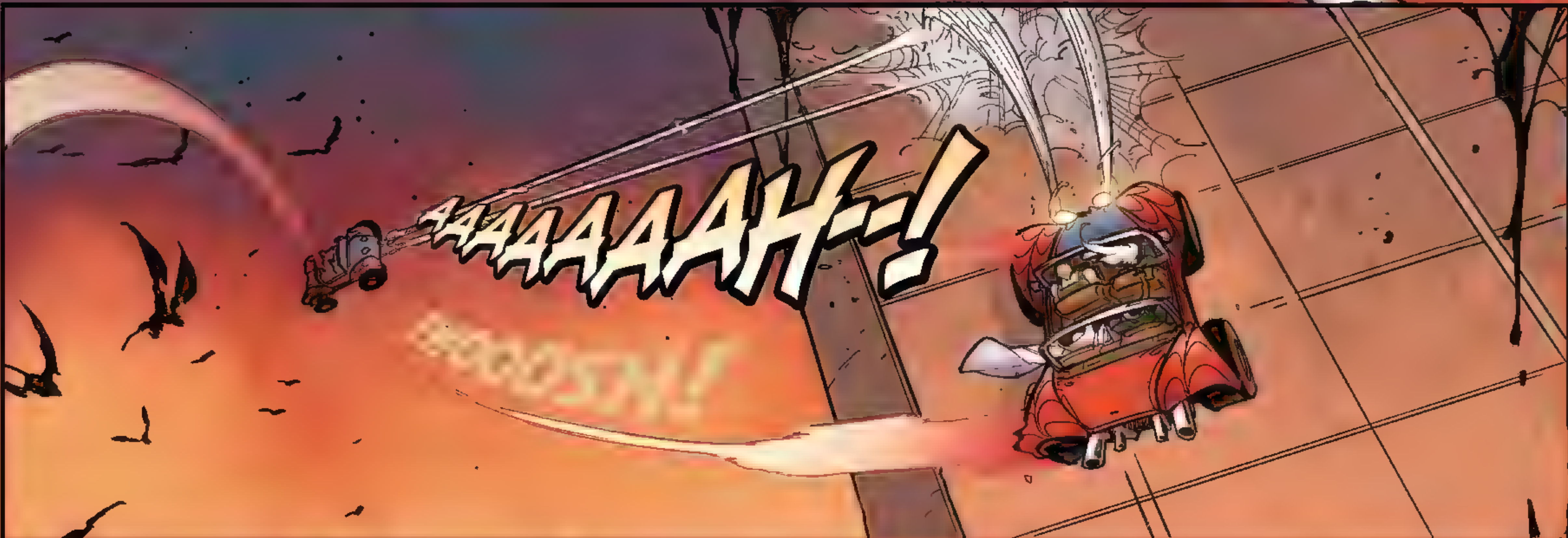
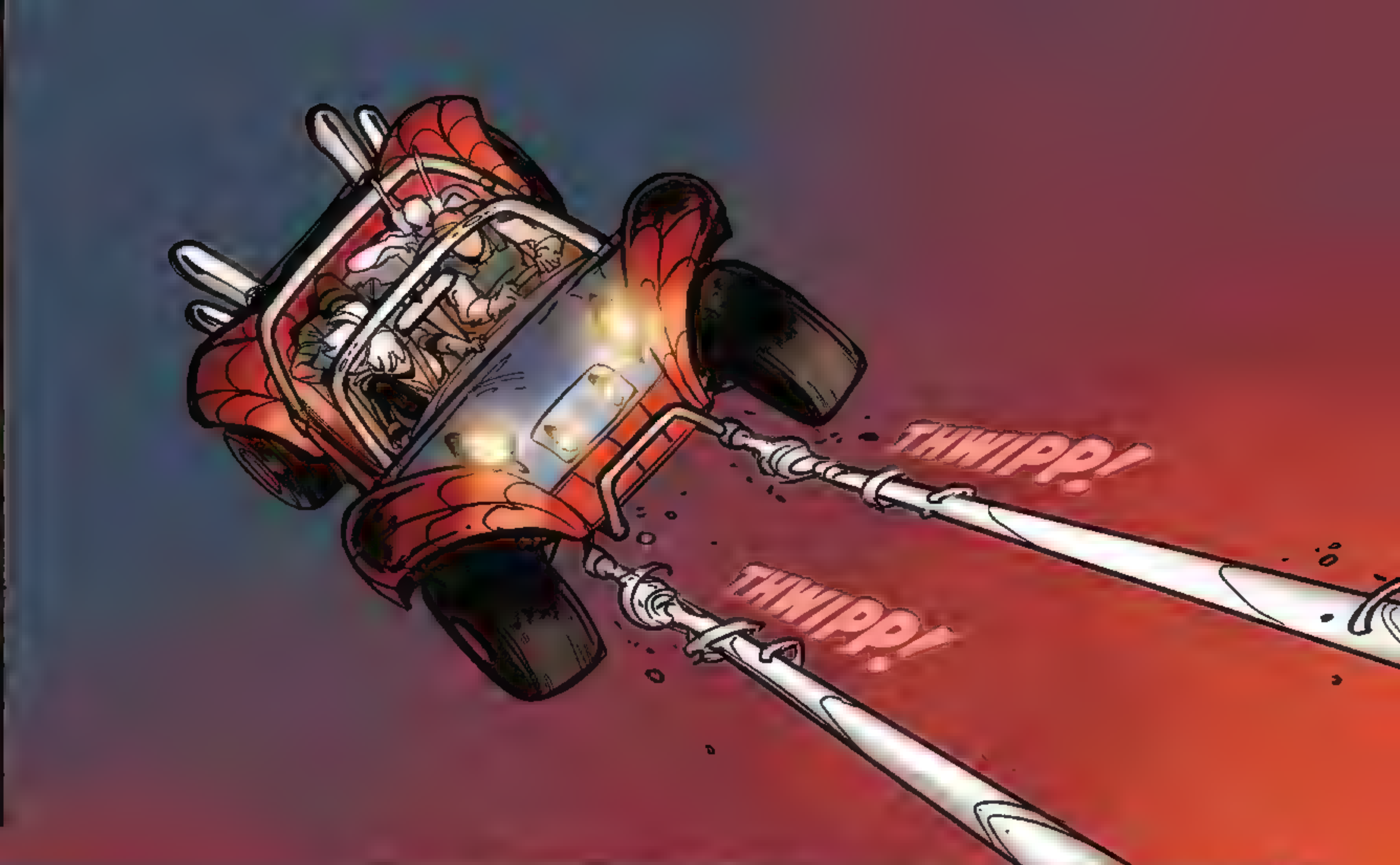
SO I LIGHT
'EM UP.

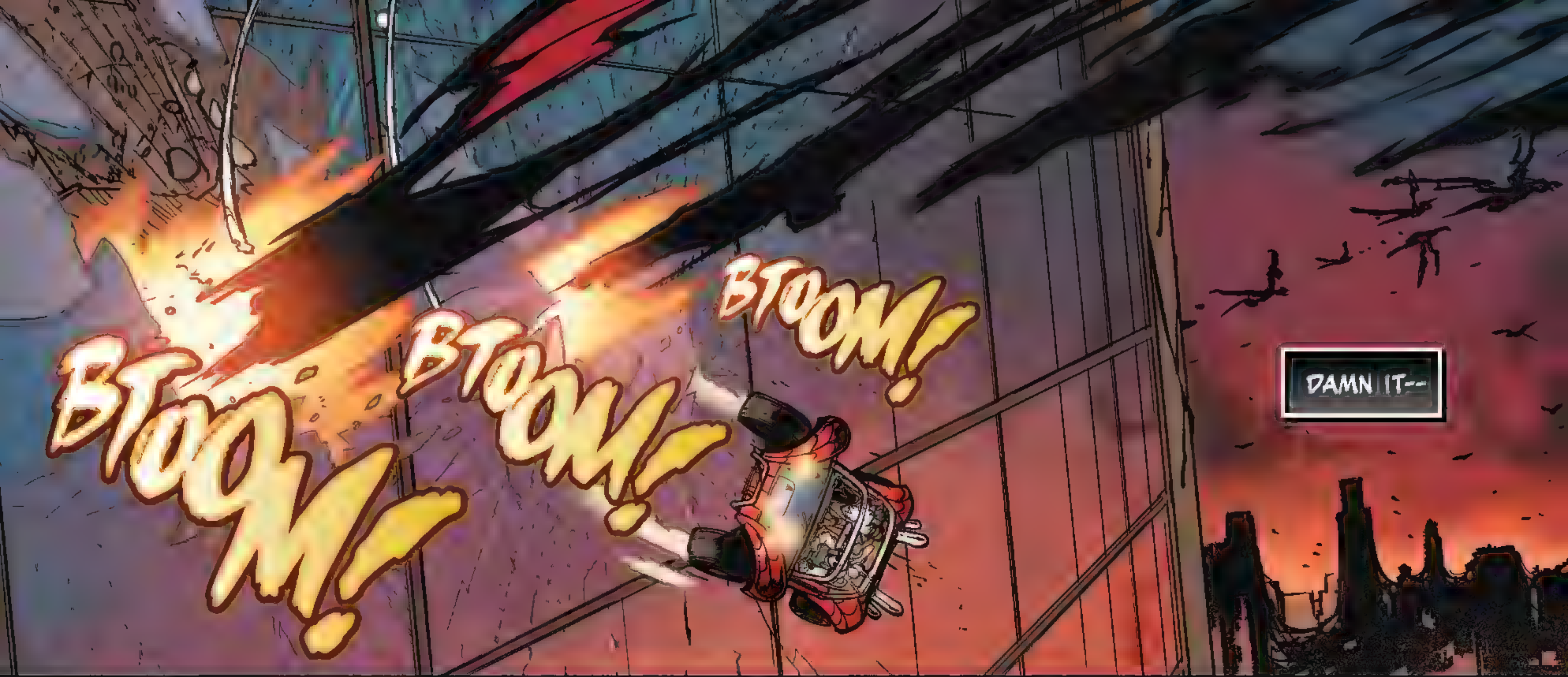


HANG
ON
TIGHT!



44444AAH!!





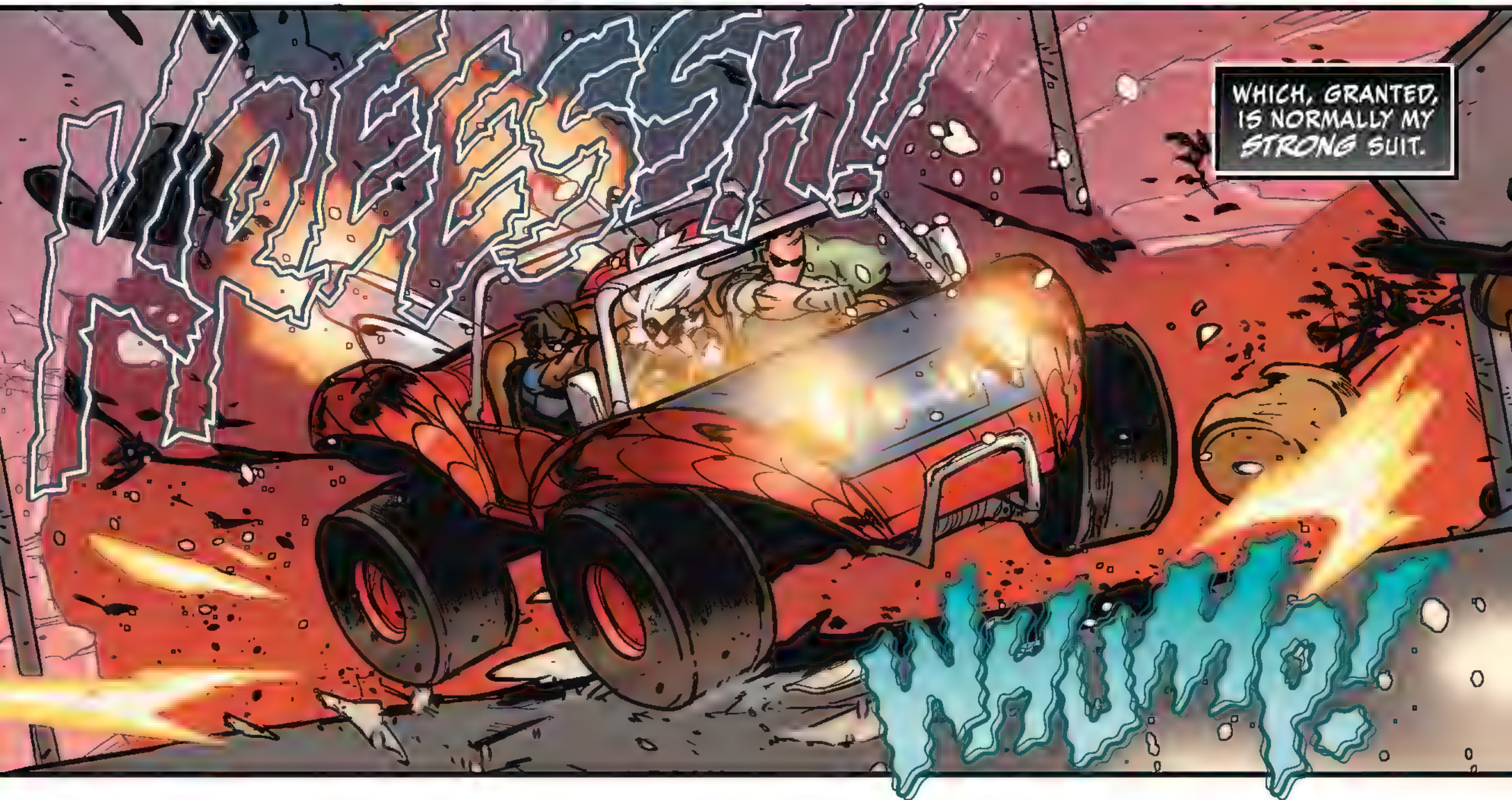
DAMN IT--



IF HE'S
NOT AWAKE,
HE CAN'T USE
THE THING
AND SAVE OUR
BUTTS--



--SO
THAT MEANS
WE'RE GOING
TO HAVE TO
IMPROVISE.



WHICH, GRANTED,
IS NORMALLY MY
STRONG SUIT.



BUT I HAVE
ALIEN STUFF
ON ONE SIDE
AND MAGIC
STUFF ON
THE OTHER...

WAAAAAAAAAAAAH!



...AND EXCUSE ME
IF IT'S BEEN A
REALLY LONG NIGHT.

KRAASH!

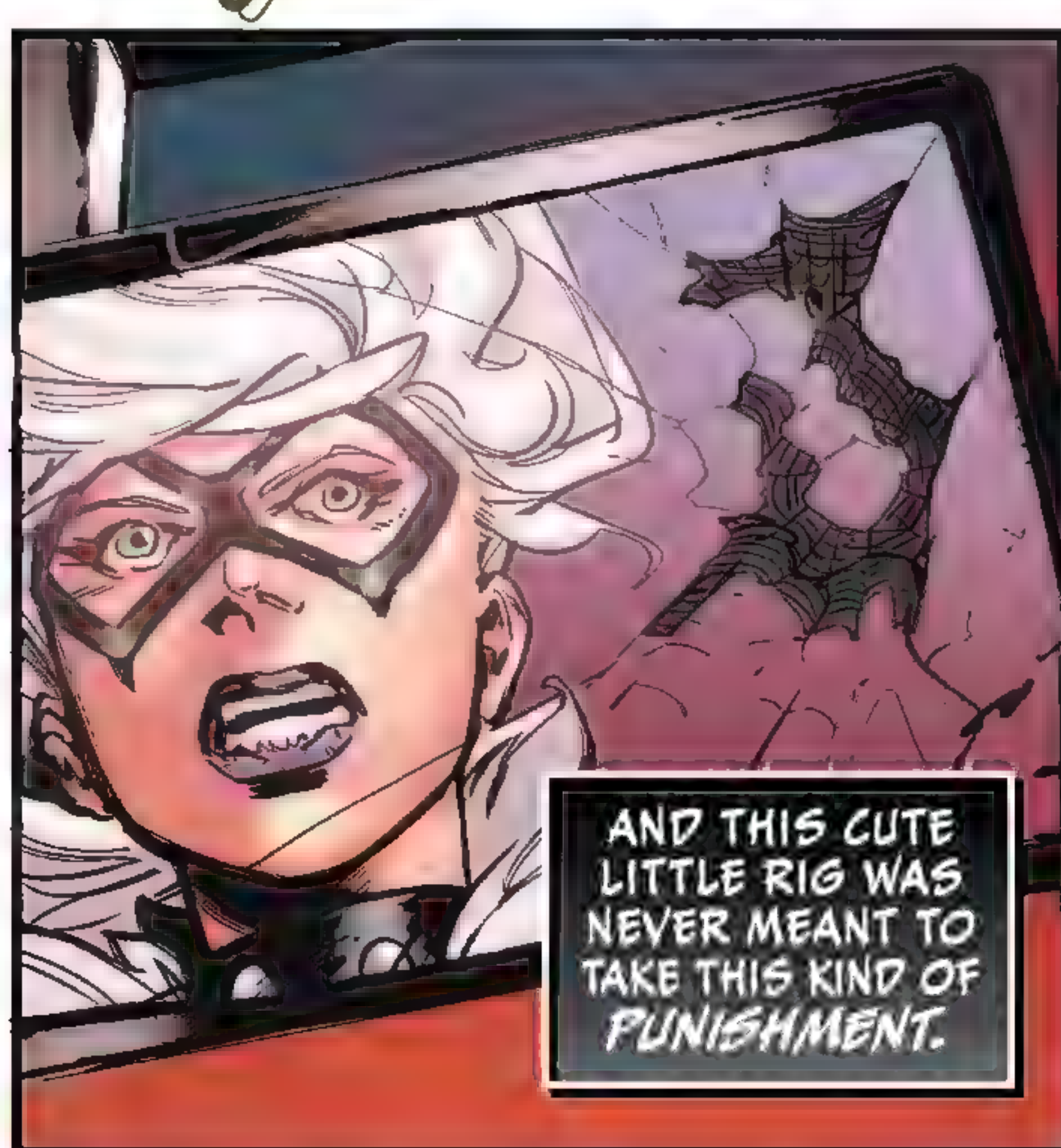


WAKE-- --YOU-- --CHARLATAN!

--UP--

SLAP!

DOC!
YOU GOTTA
WAKE UP!



AND THIS CUTE
LITTLE RIG WAS
NEVER MEANT TO
TAKE THIS KIND OF
PUNISHMENT.



HOLD ON!

NONE OF US ARE,
NOT REALLY.



RUNK!

WE'RE CROOKS.



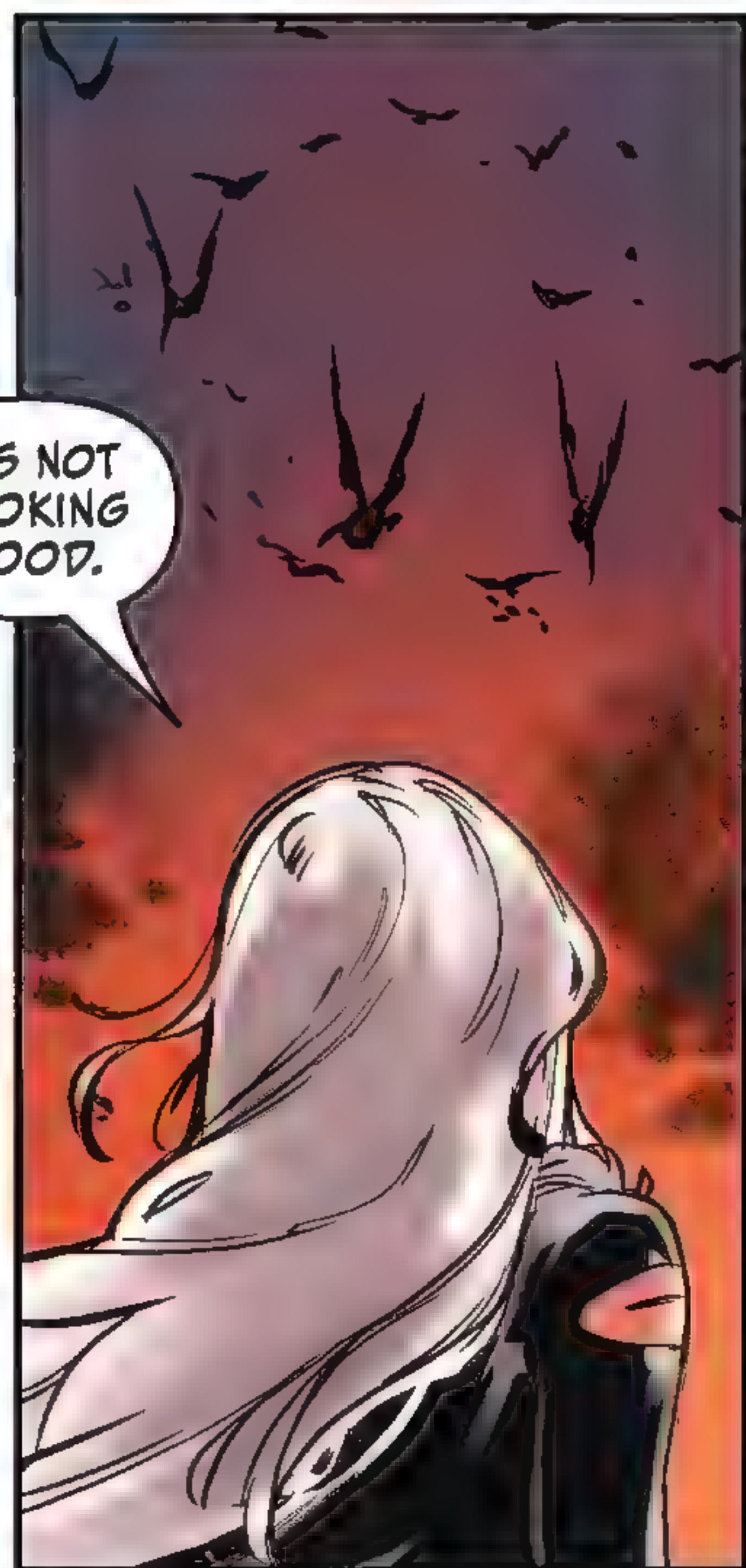
WHUMP!

WHUMP!

THIEVES.

WHUMP!

WE'RE OUT OF
OUR ELEMENT.







WHERE'D
YOU SAY THIS
THING CAME
FROM?

SCRAK!



"ASGARD."

BARRIDOOOM!



Oh.

Oh,
I SEE.



Huh?
I GUESS
THAT DIDN'T
WORK. SO
AM I--



--DEAD?



NO,
DARLING--
NOTHING SO
DRAMATIC.



AAH!





FOX?

WHERE
ARE WE?
WHAT'S
GOING--

I AM
NOT THE
BLACK
FOX.

THIS IS JUST
A FAMILIAR
SHAPE, ONE
WHICH I MIGHT
USE TO SPEAK
WITH YOU.

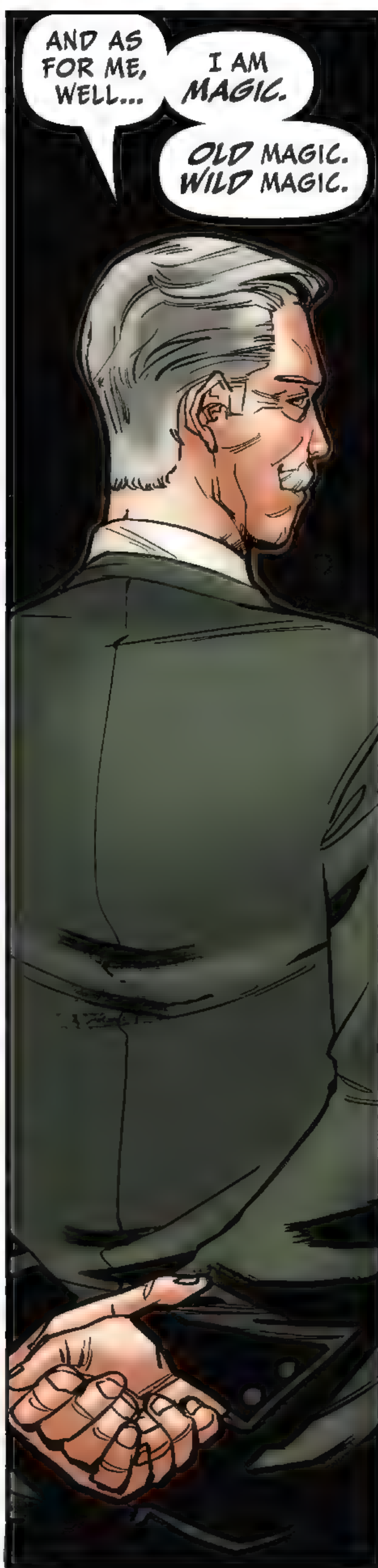
OKAY, PAL,
WHAT'S THE
GAG?

WHO THE
HELL ARE YOU,
AND WHERE ARE
MY GUYS?



CALL THIS A...
PARTITION OF YOUR
CONSCIOUSNESS.

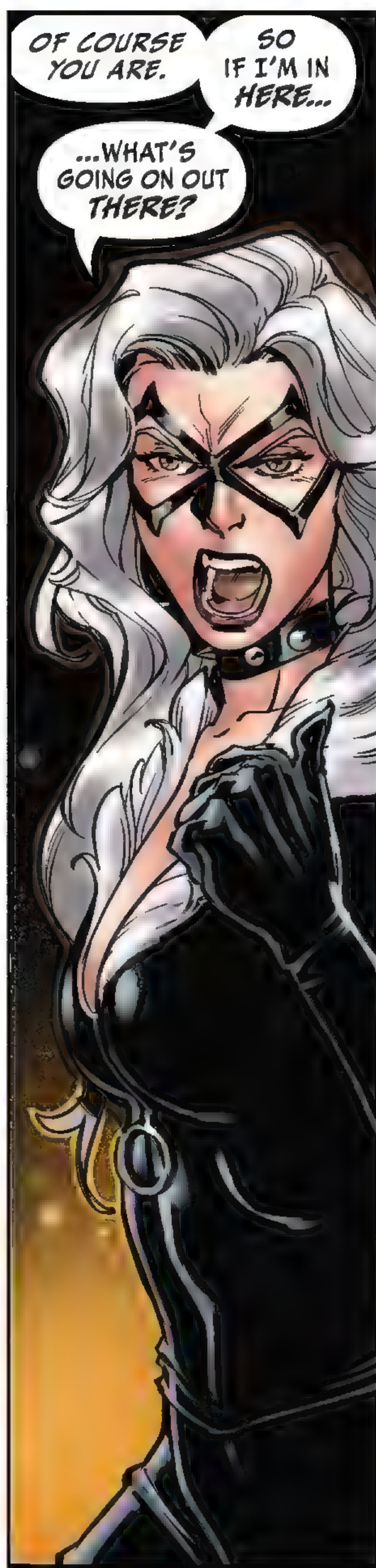
A LITTLE SPACE
IN YOUR MIND WHERE
WE MIGHT HAVE A...
CONVERSATION.



AND AS
FOR ME,
WELL...

I AM
MAGIC.

OLD MAGIC.
WILD MAGIC.



OF COURSE
YOU ARE.

SO
IF I'M IN
HERE...

...WHAT'S
GOING ON OUT
THERE?



IN
REALITY?

I WON'T
LIE TO YOU,
DARLING...

"...IT'S LOOKING BAD."

HARDYY!

WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE PLAYING AT UP THERE?!

BOOM!

"QUITE BAD."

OH NO.

"OH NO" INDEED.

"OH NO"
INDEED.

I NEED TO GET BACK.

HEY!

ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME? SEND ME BACK!

NOT UNTIL YOU'VE HEARD WHAT I HAVE TO SAY.

AS I SAID BEFORE, I REPRESENT MAGIC. EXTREMELY OLD MAGIC. EXTREMELY WILD MAGIC.

IN TAKING THE FRAGMENT OF YGGDRASIL, YOU EFFECTIVELY GRIPPED A LIVE WIRE. AND THROUGH THAT LIVE WIRE, RUNS MAGIC.

I'LL BITE. SO WHAT DOES MAGIC WANT WITH ME?

I WANT YOU TO SAY YES.

YES?

MAGIC IS GOVERNED BY RULES.

I WANT TO BE FREE, TO BURN BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL AND CARVE MY MARK ACROSS CREATION.

BUT IN ORDER TO DO THAT, I REQUIRE A CONDUIT. ONE THAT CAN PROVIDE CONSENT.

Oh YEAH?

AND WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME, CHUMLEY?

POWER.

THE POWER OF CREATION ITSELF.

OKAY. SAY I'M INTERESTED.

YOU'VE GOT TO BUY ME DINNER FIRST, SAILOR.

I'M NOT THAT KIND OF GIRL.

YOU MOST ASSUREDLY ARE.



TALK IS
CHEAP, BABY--
AND I HAVE
EXPENSIVE
TASTES.

SO
GIVE ME A
TASTE.

WHAT DO YOU
SUGGEST?



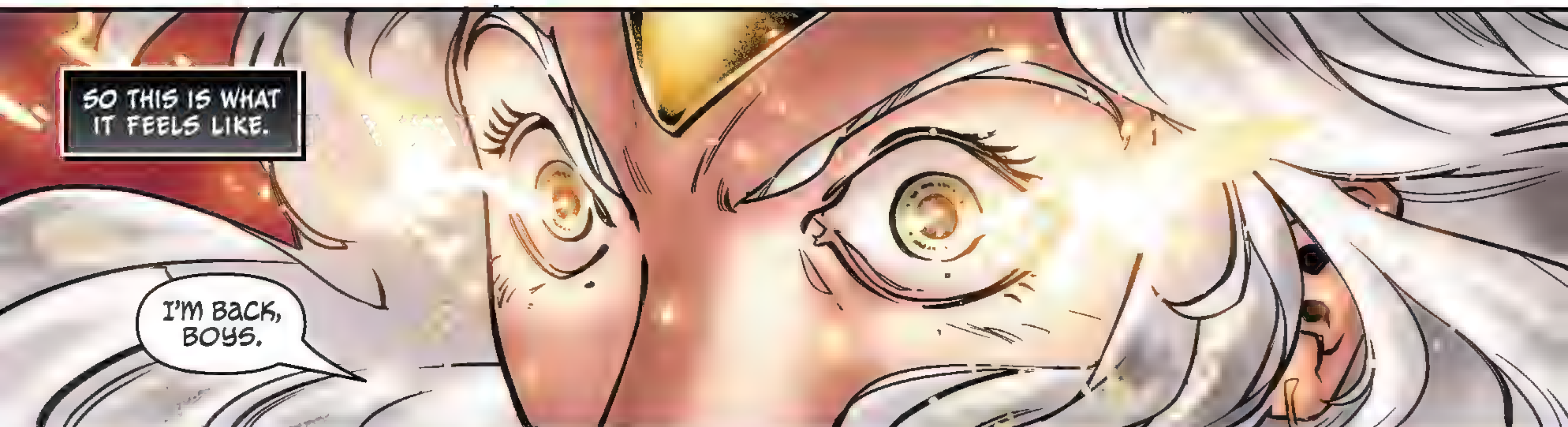
MY GUYS ARE
SITTING DUCKS
OUT THERE, AND
THAT'S ON ME.

THOSE
DRAGONS ARE
COMING TO PICK
US OFF.



I WANT
TO PUNISH
THEM.

SPLENDID.



SO THIS IS WHAT
IT FEELS LIKE.

I'M BACK,
BOYS.



A HANDSHAKE WITH
A HYDROGEN BOMB.

and
EVERYTHING'S
GOING TO BE
OKAY.

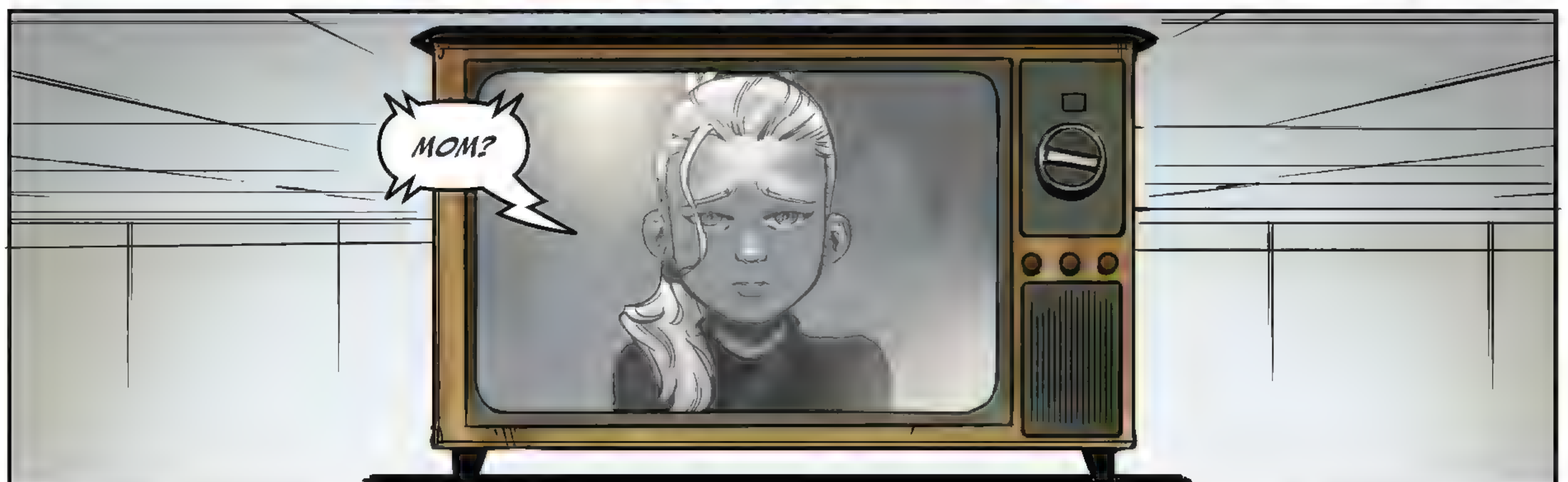
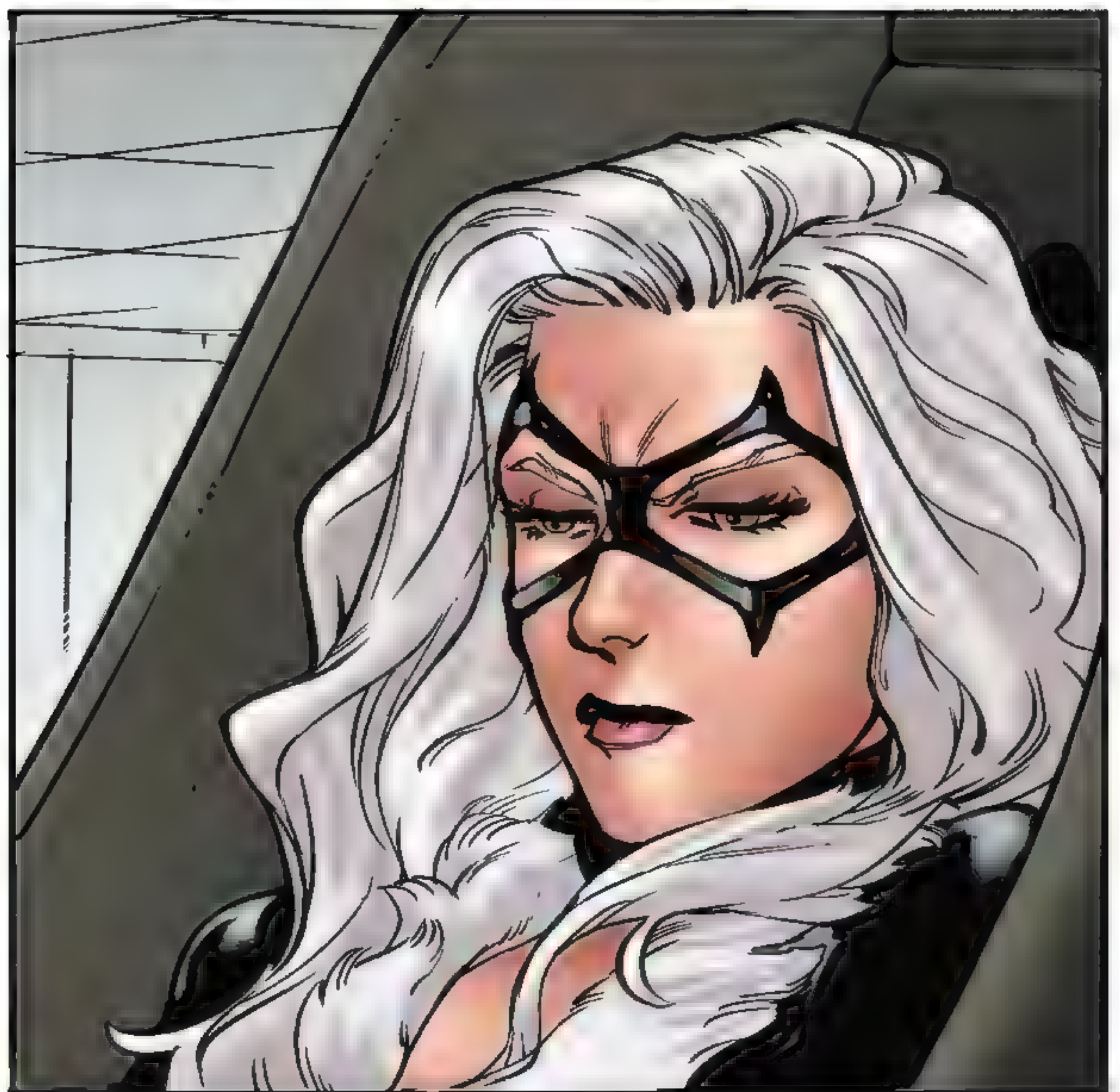
A full-page comic book illustration depicting a fierce battle. On the left, a woman with long, flowing white hair and a golden, form-fitting dress is shown in a dynamic, lunging pose. She is surrounded by bright, glowing yellow and orange energy beams that radiate from her hands and the sword she holds. The sword is long and slender, with a golden hilt and a white blade. In the center and right, a large, dark, scaly dragon with red-tipped wings is engaged in combat. The dragon's body is covered in intricate scales, and its wings are spread wide. Several smaller, similar dragons are seen flying in the background. The scene is set against a backdrop of a city with tall buildings, some of which are partially obscured by the intense light and energy of the battle. The overall color palette is dominated by warm tones of red, orange, and yellow, creating a sense of fire and destruction. In the top left corner, a small black box contains white text. In the bottom right corner, there are three separate black boxes containing white text.

I'VE GOT ALL
THE STARS IN THE
UNIVERSE BURNING
IN MY BLOOD.

THE MUSIC OF THE
SPHERES CRASHING
IN MY EARS.

MY KILLING INTENT IS
A FORCE OF NATURE.
A LAW OF THE UNIVERSE.

WHO COULD SAY
NO TO THIS?



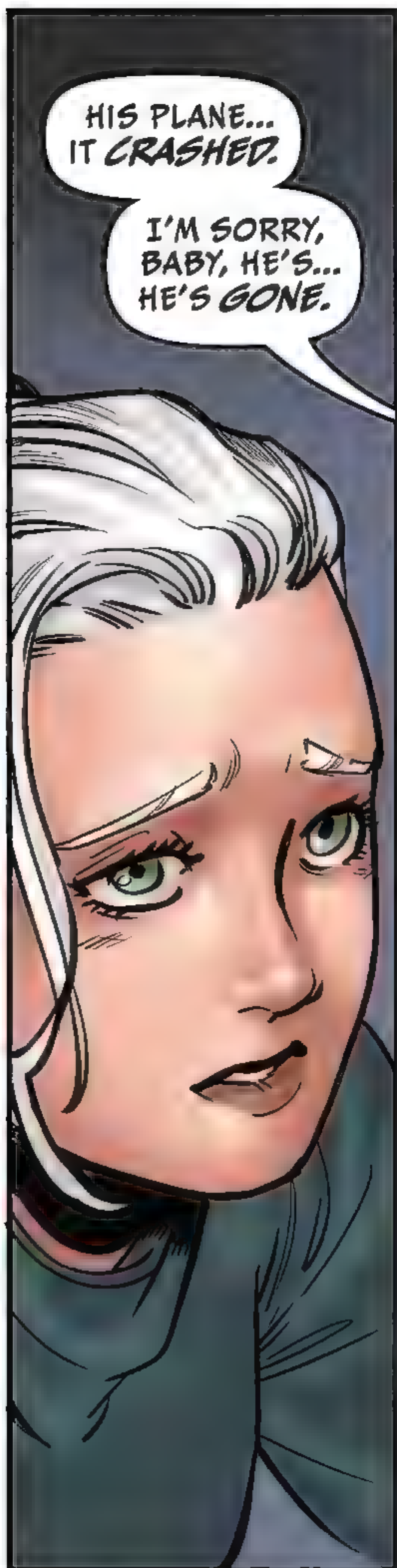


MOM?

WHAT'S
WRONG?
WHAT IS IT?
MOM!

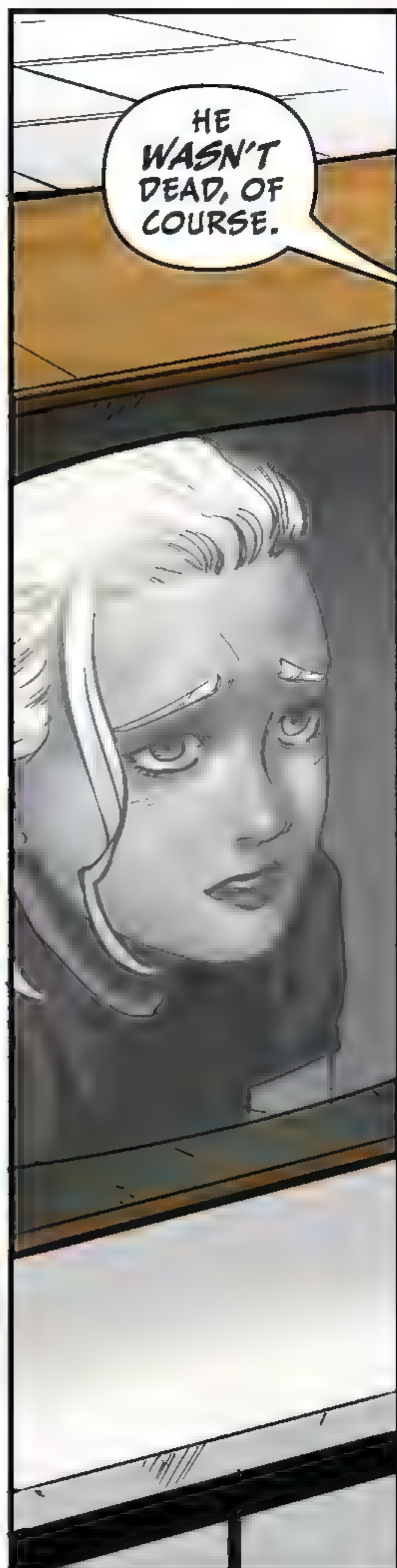
FELICIA...

IT'S YOUR
FATHER.

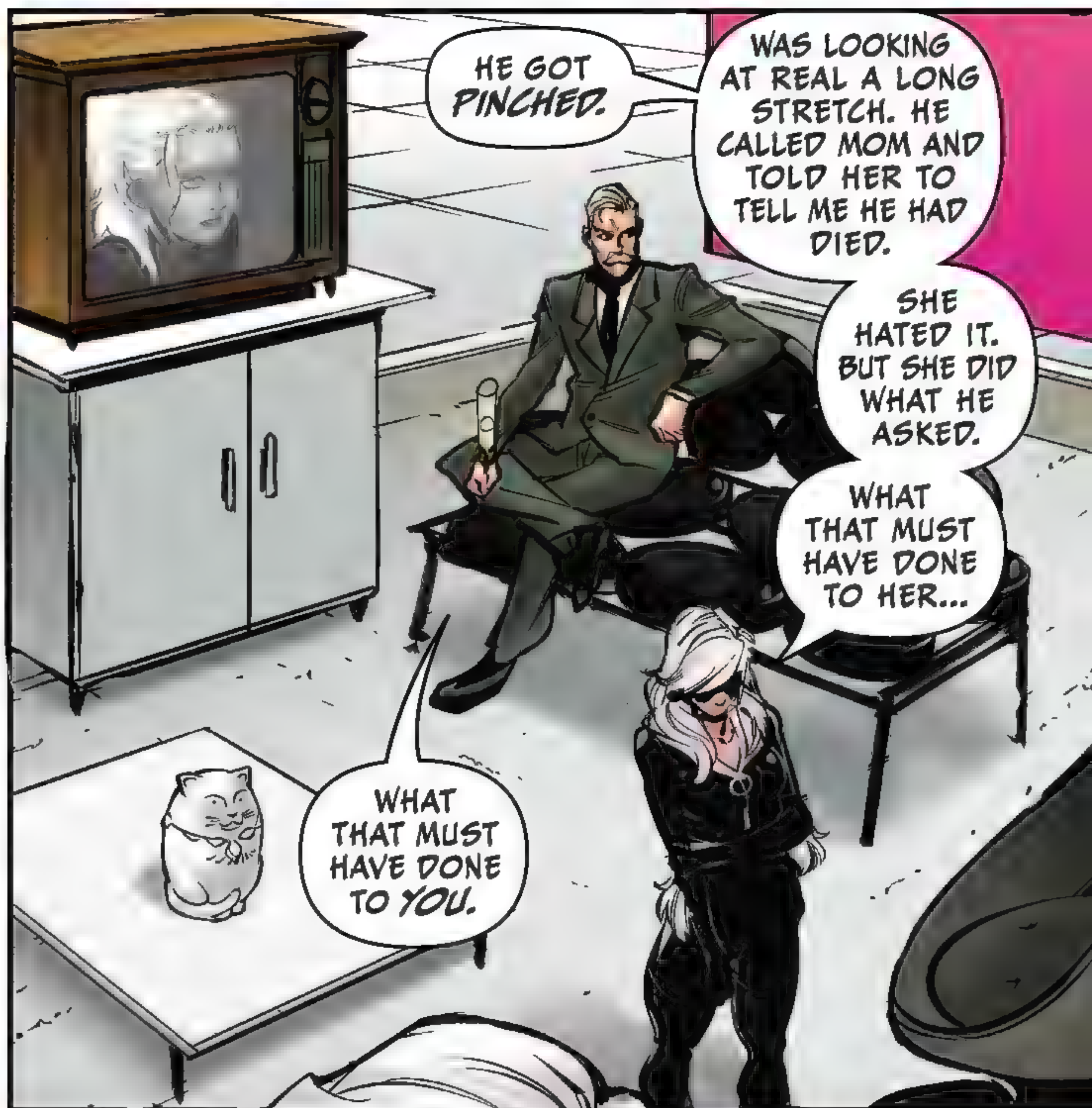


HIS PLANE...
IT **CRASHED**.

I'M SORRY,
BABY, HE'S...
HE'S **GONE**.



HE
WASN'T
DEAD, OF
COURSE.



HE GOT
PINCHED.

WAS LOOKING
AT REAL A LONG
STRETCH. HE
CALLED MOM AND
TOLD HER TO
TELL ME HE HAD
DIED.

SHE
HATED IT.
BUT SHE DID
WHAT HE
ASKED.

WHAT
THAT MUST
HAVE DONE
TO HER...

WHAT
THAT MUST
HAVE DONE
TO YOU.



I WAS FINE.
I LIVED.

AND I GOT
HIM OUT JAIL,
SO HE COULD
DIE IN HIS
OWN BED.



"YES."

"YOU
ALWAYS
LIVE,
DON'T
YOU?"

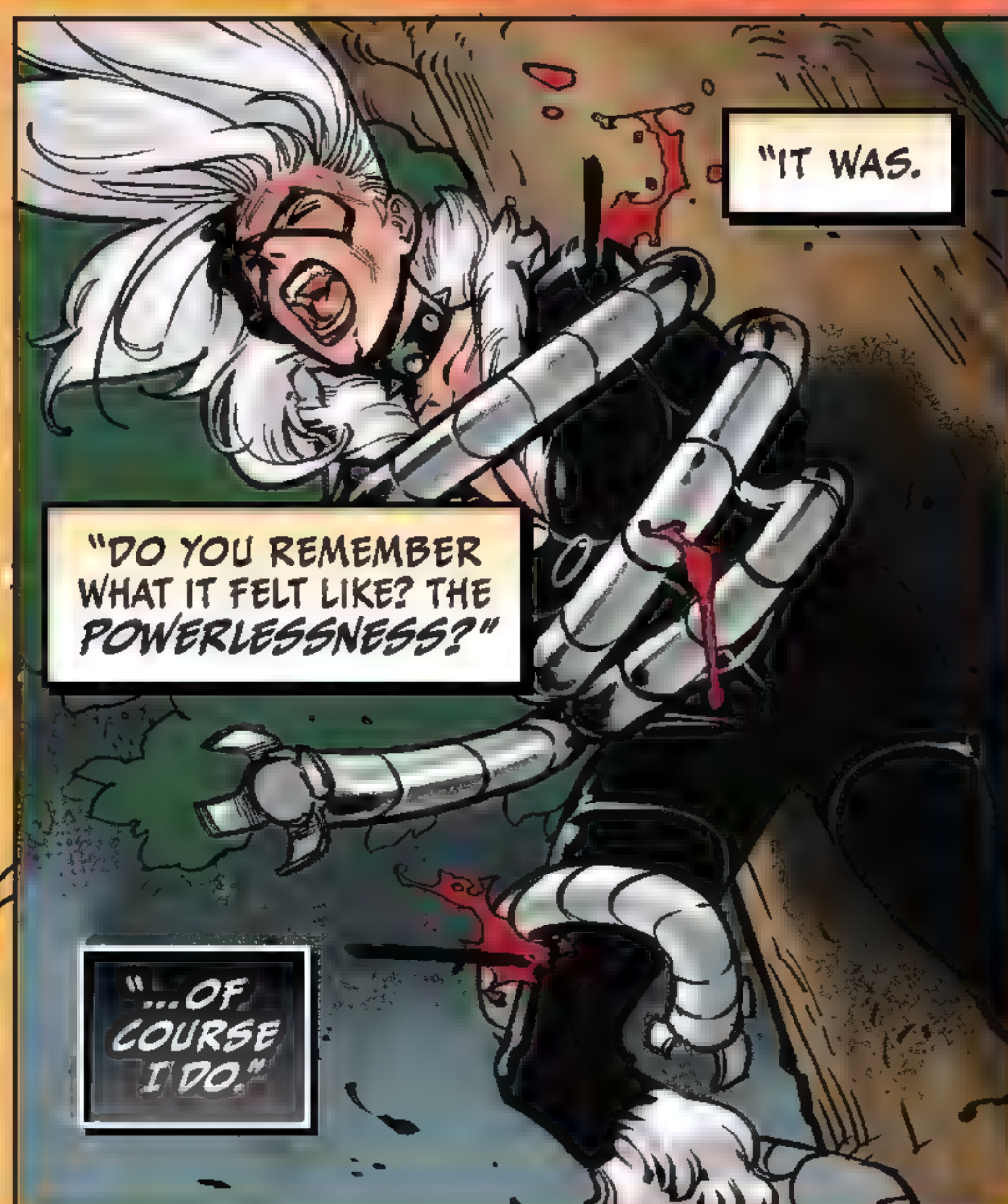
"YOU LIVE,
BUT YOU ARE
ALWAYS HURT.
BADLY HURT."

"LIKE THE GANG WAR
BETWEEN THE OWL AND
DOCTOR OCTOPUS."



THAT...

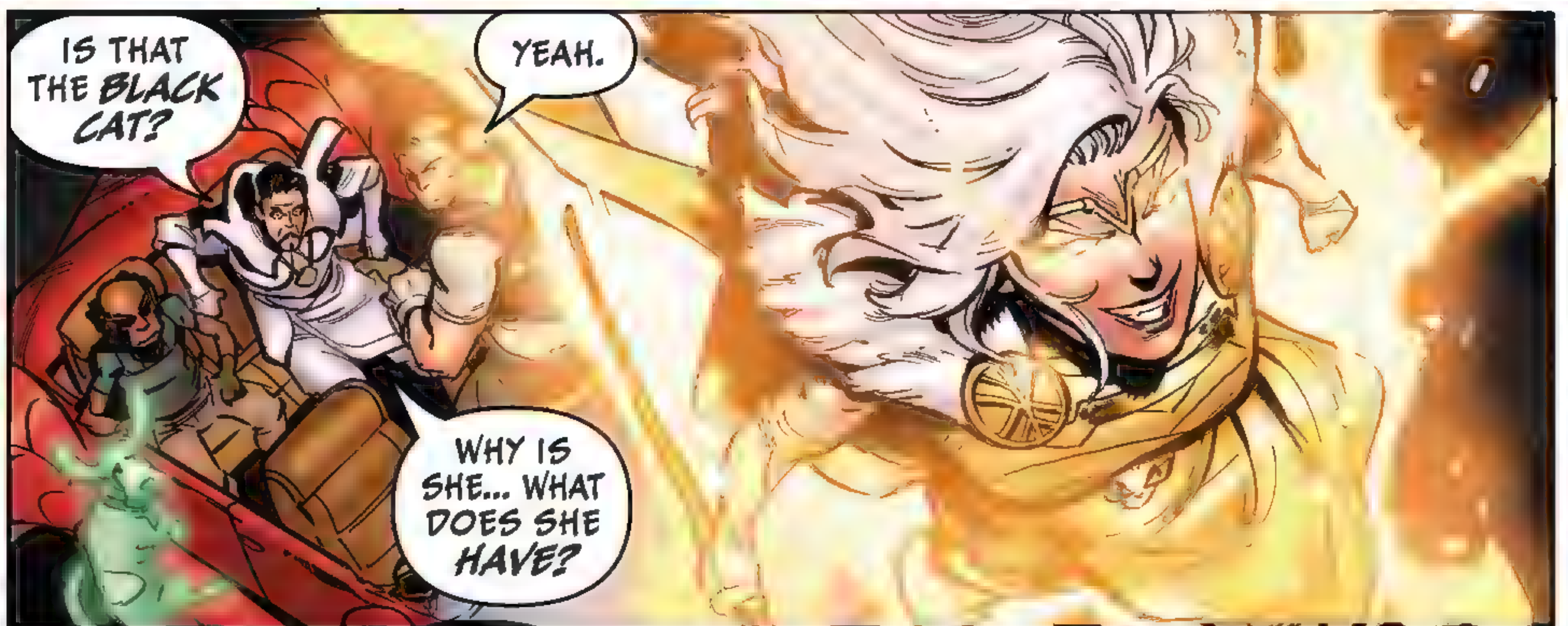
THAT
WAS A BAD
NIGHT.

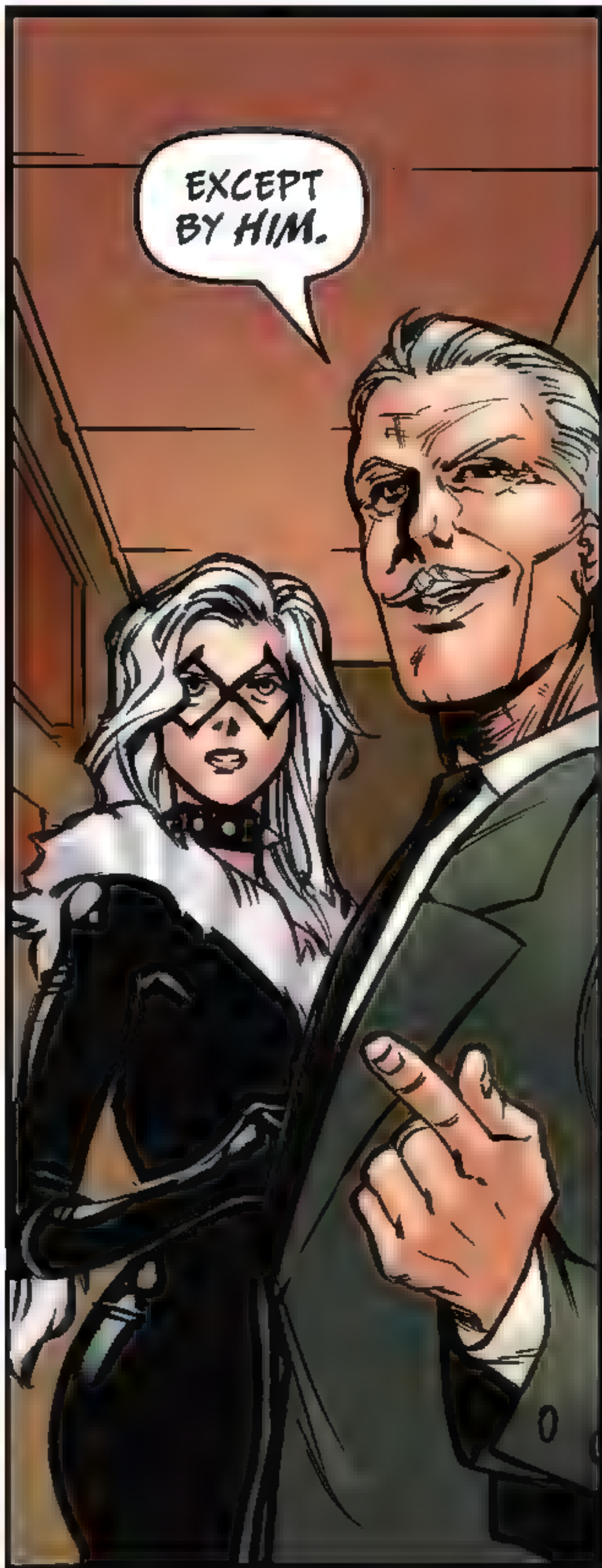
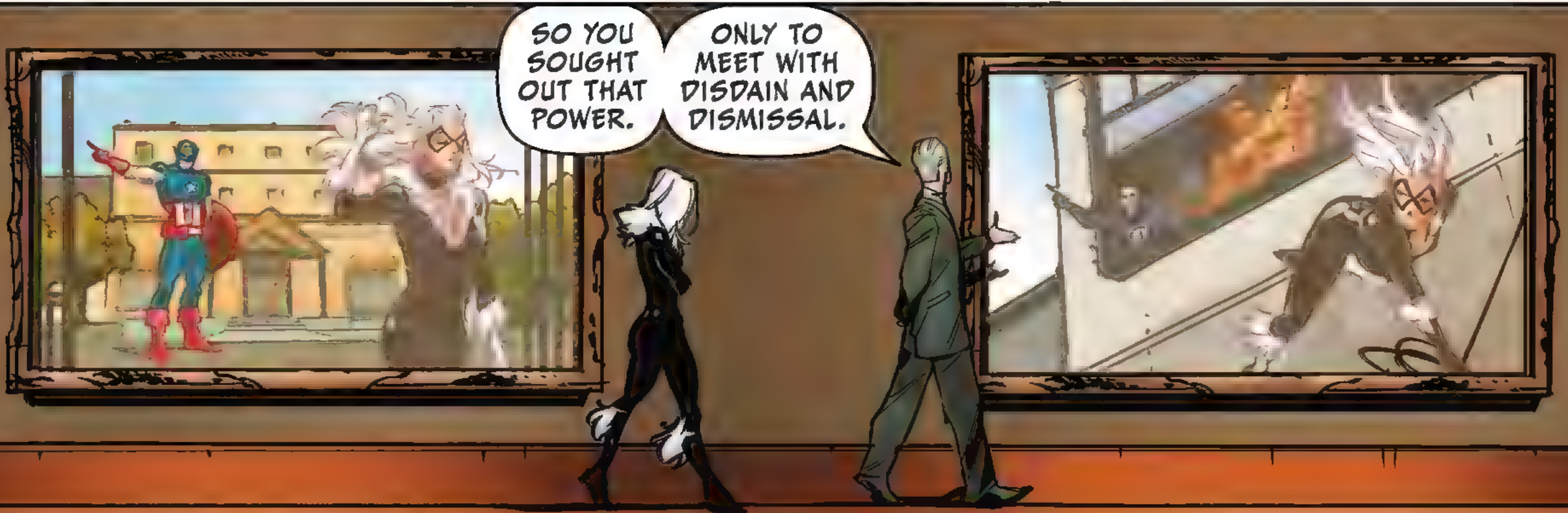
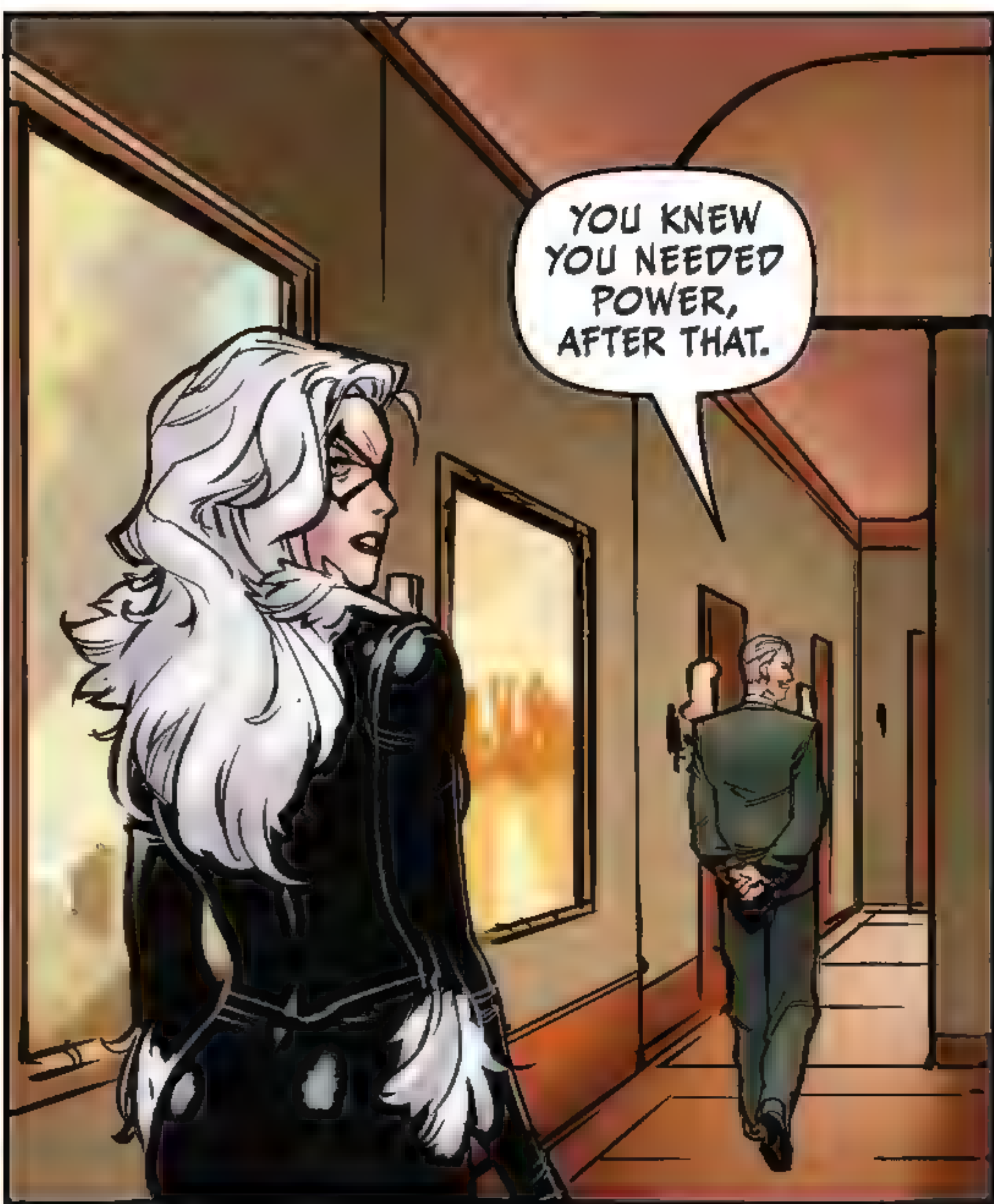


"IT WAS."

"DO YOU REMEMBER
WHAT IT FELT LIKE? THE
POWERLESSNESS?"

"...OF
COURSE
I DO."





"LOOK,
I DIDN'T
KNOW..."

"BUT IT DIDN'T
MATTER, DID
IT? NOT TO
SPIDER-MAN."

THIS IS
EXTREMELY
BAD.

I'LL TAKE
IT OFF HER. I
DON'T CARE WHAT
HAPPENS, SO
LONG AS SHE'S
OKAY.

IT'S
NOT THAT
SIMPLE.

SHE IS CHANNELING
THE **RAW POWER
OF CREATION**, WHICH
IS AS UTTERLY AMORAL
AND DESTRUCTIVE AS
A HURRICANE. AS AN
ATOMIC BOMB.

SHE
MUST PUT IT
DOWN OF HER
OWN ACCORD
BEFORE SHE IS
OVERWHELMED.
AND IF SHE IS
OVERWHELMED,
WELL...

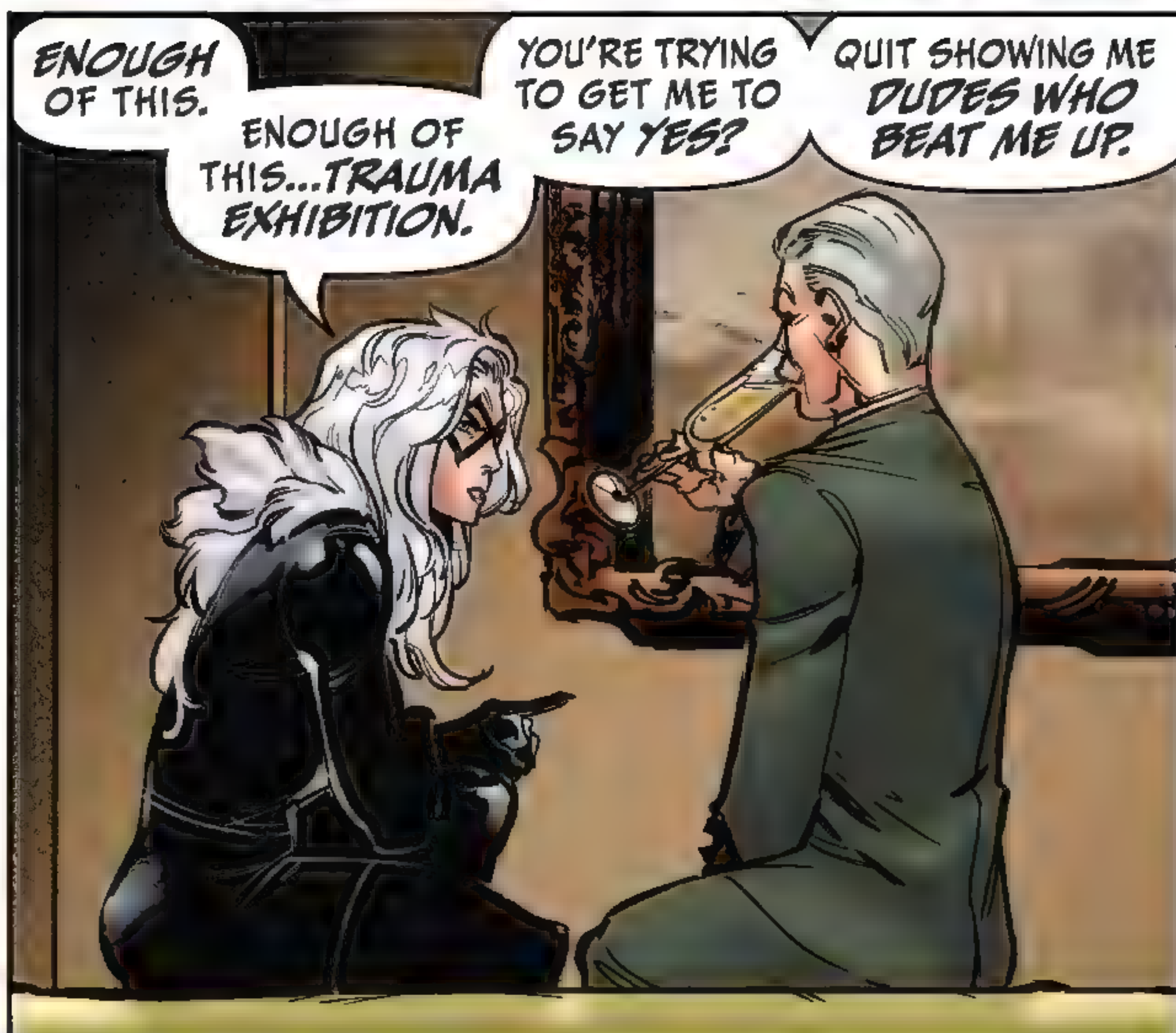
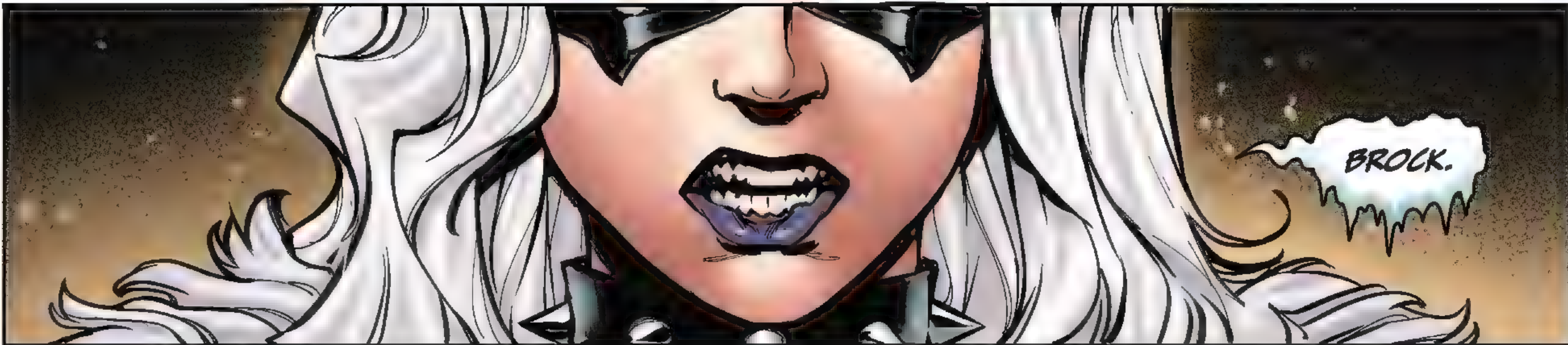
...WE
WILL HAVE
CREATED
A DANGER
FAR WORSE
THAN WHAT
WE WERE
FIGHTING
BEFORE.

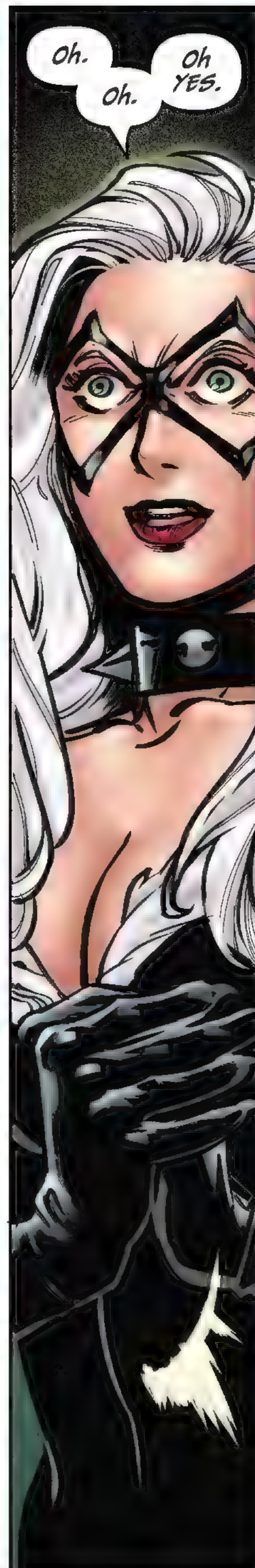
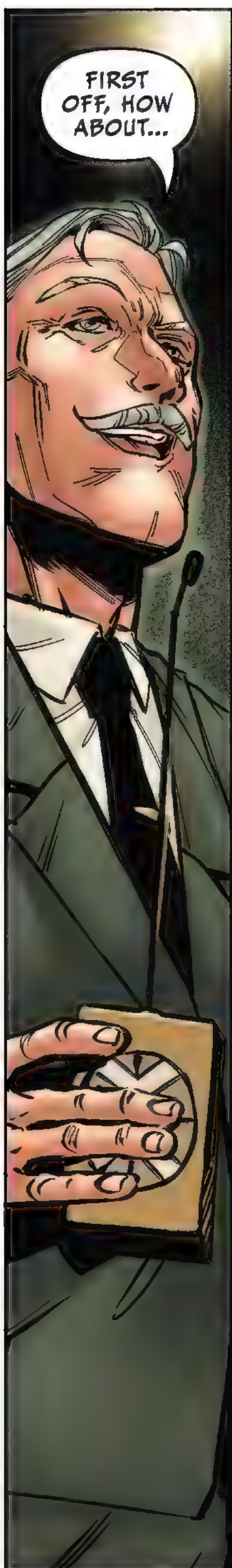
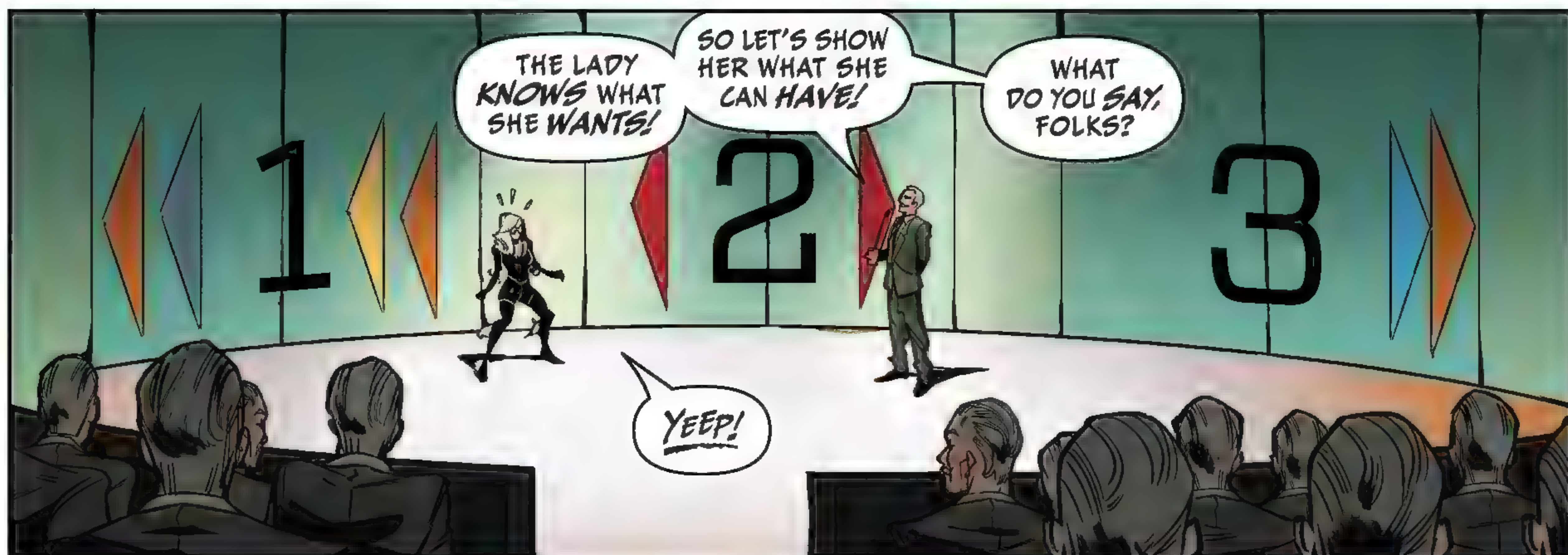
"THE ONLY
ONE WHO CAN
STOP HER..."

"...IS
HERSELF.

"AND I PRAY TO ALL THE
GODS I'VE EVER KNOWN
THAT SHE IS STRONG
ENOUGH TO RESIST
THE TEMPTATION OF
ULTIMATE POWER."

BUT EVEN
WITH YOUR
**NEWFOUND
POWER...**







BUT IS THAT
ENOUGH?

OF
COURSE
NOT!

WHAT
CAN YOU GIVE THE
GIRL WHO WANTS
EVERYTHING?

WHY...

...EVERYTHING,
OF COURSE.

THE WEALTH
OF NATIONS. BAUBLES
OF COSMIC IMPORT. THE
MIGHTIEST HEROES AND
VILLAINS, KNEELING
AT YOUR FEET.

AND, OF
COURSE...

...YOUR
FATHER,
BROUGHT
BACK TO
YOU!

YOUR
MOTHER,
NO LONGER
A WIDOW.

Oh.

IS THAT
ALL, FOLKS?
CAN WE SEND OUR
GIRL HOME WITH
JUST THAT?

DEATH
TO HER
ENEMIES? THE
TREASURES
OF THE
UNIVERSE?

SURELY
NOT.

SURELY
WE CAN *DO*
BETTER THAN
THAT.

LOVE.

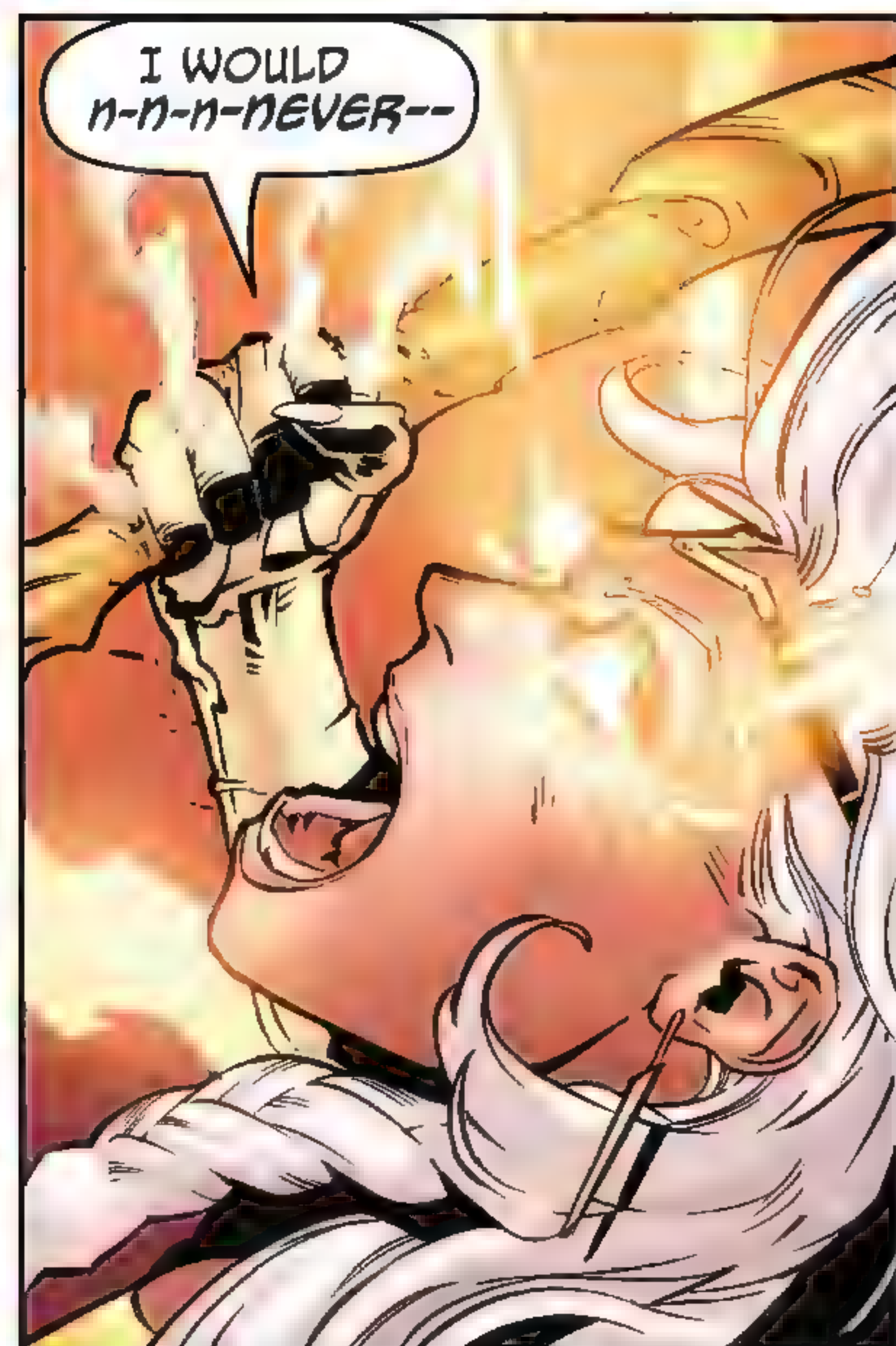
EVERY HEART
YOU'VE BROKEN,
HEALED.

EVERY LOVER
WHO LEFT YOU,
RETURNED TO
YOUR SIDE.

Oh.

Oh NO.
NO.

HOW
DARE
YOU.





ARE YOU
OKAY?

BOSS!

I CANNOT
BELIEVE
IT...

HARDY!



FOR A MAGICIAN,
SURVIVING THE WILD
MAGIC'S TEMPTATIONS
WOULD BE ONE THING--

--BUT FOR THE
UNINITIATED?

WHAT
DID IT
OFFER
YOU?



EVERYTHING.

MORE THAN
MY SOUL COULD
TAKE. NOT WITHOUT
BECOMING SOMEONE
I COULDN'T BEAR
BEING.



....
AS LITTLE
AS I LIKE TO
ADMIT IT, I AM
IMPRESSED.

OH
YEAH?

YEAH.
I THOUGHT
YOU WERE
GOING TO KILL
US ALL.



IT WAS
THIS CLOSE,
DOC.

BUT
THANKS,
I LIKE YOU
TOO.



For as long as I can remember, I've wanted to be a super hero.

The Queen Cat.

But "as long as I can remember" only stretches back a year and a half, when I climbed out of a freezing river, my brain scrubbed of any memories of my life before, so that's... unique.

That's why I keep this journal. It helps me to stay rooted in who I am.

Roderick Kingsley, the Hobgoblin, gave me this name. This costume.

I was one of his "Hob-Heroes."

That was when he was on his hero kick.

It didn't last long. He went rat again pretty quickly after that.

But I didn't.

I'm the Queen Cat. I'm a hero.

A super hero.



It's all I know.
It's all I have.

I don't know
much about who
I was before.
I don't want to.

But I know
it wasn't good.



A new, clean life. A good
life. A heroic life...

It would all
be perfect...



Except for her.

Felicia Hardy.
The Black Cat.

The original.

And if she's
the original...



THE FRICK COLLECTION. LATER.

...what does that make me?



I've been working as a caterer to make ends meet. I don't have a legal identity, but temp agencies never check too hard.

I need to go incognito though. Too many people knew "Lily Hollister," especially the type who'd be here.



ONE SIDE, IMBECILE!

SORRY, LADY, 'SCUSE US.

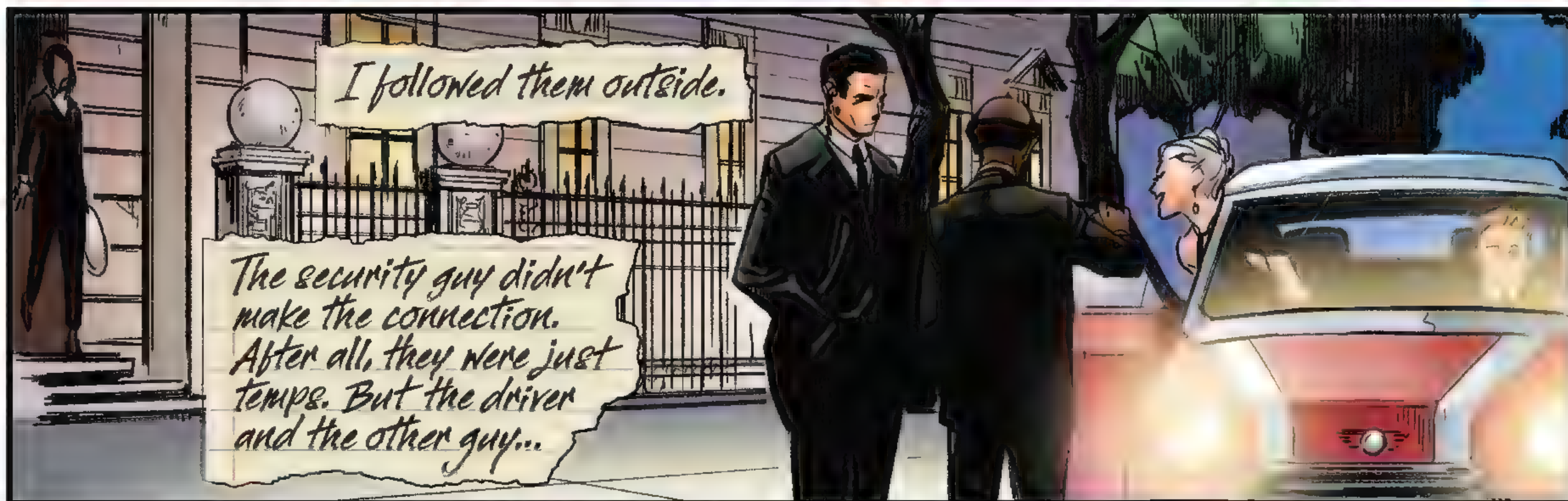
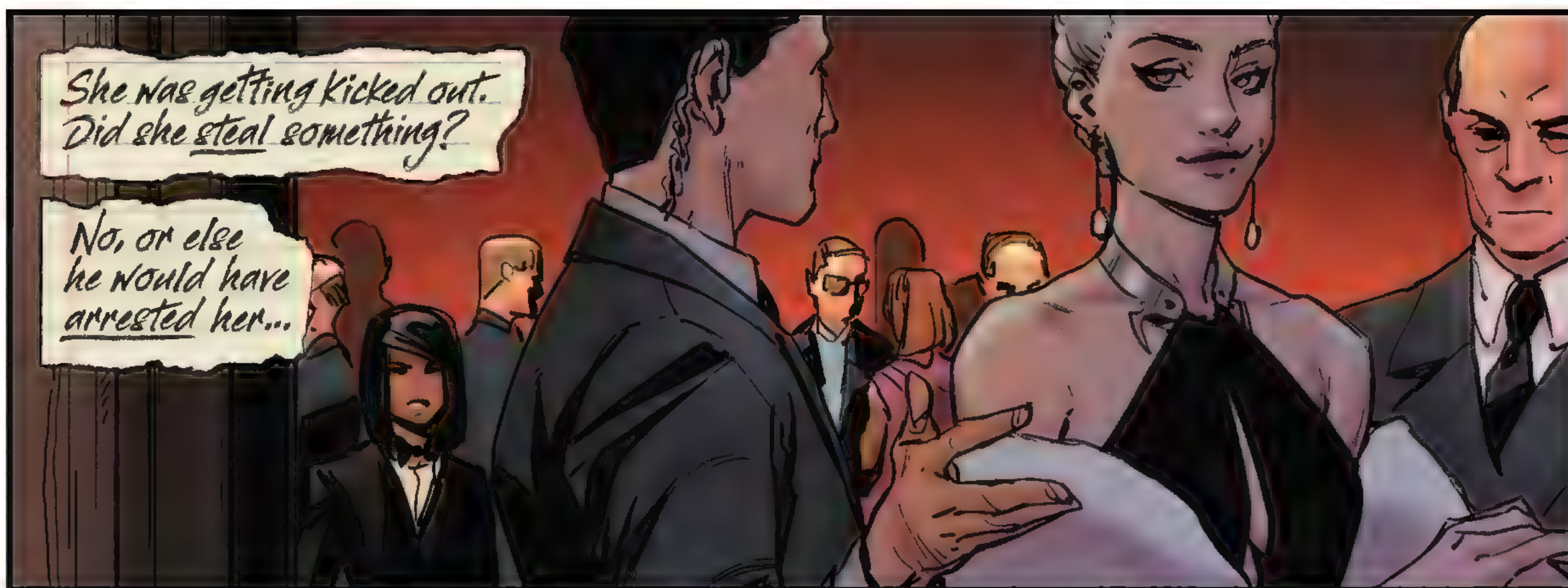
Anyway, there had been an E. coli outbreak, so there were a lot of temps there. Including those two jerks.



I forgot about them pretty quick though.



As it turned out, it wasn't the art that caught my eye.



LATER.



THANKS FOR THE FOOD, BY THE WAY.

HEY, US HOB-HEROES HAVE TO LOOK OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER.

ANYWAYS, THE BLACK CAT IS WORKING.

I WAS RIGHT THERE, AND SHE STOLE A PAINTING RIGHT FROM UNDER MY NOSE.



A REAL HERO WOULDN'T HAVE LET THAT HAPPEN.

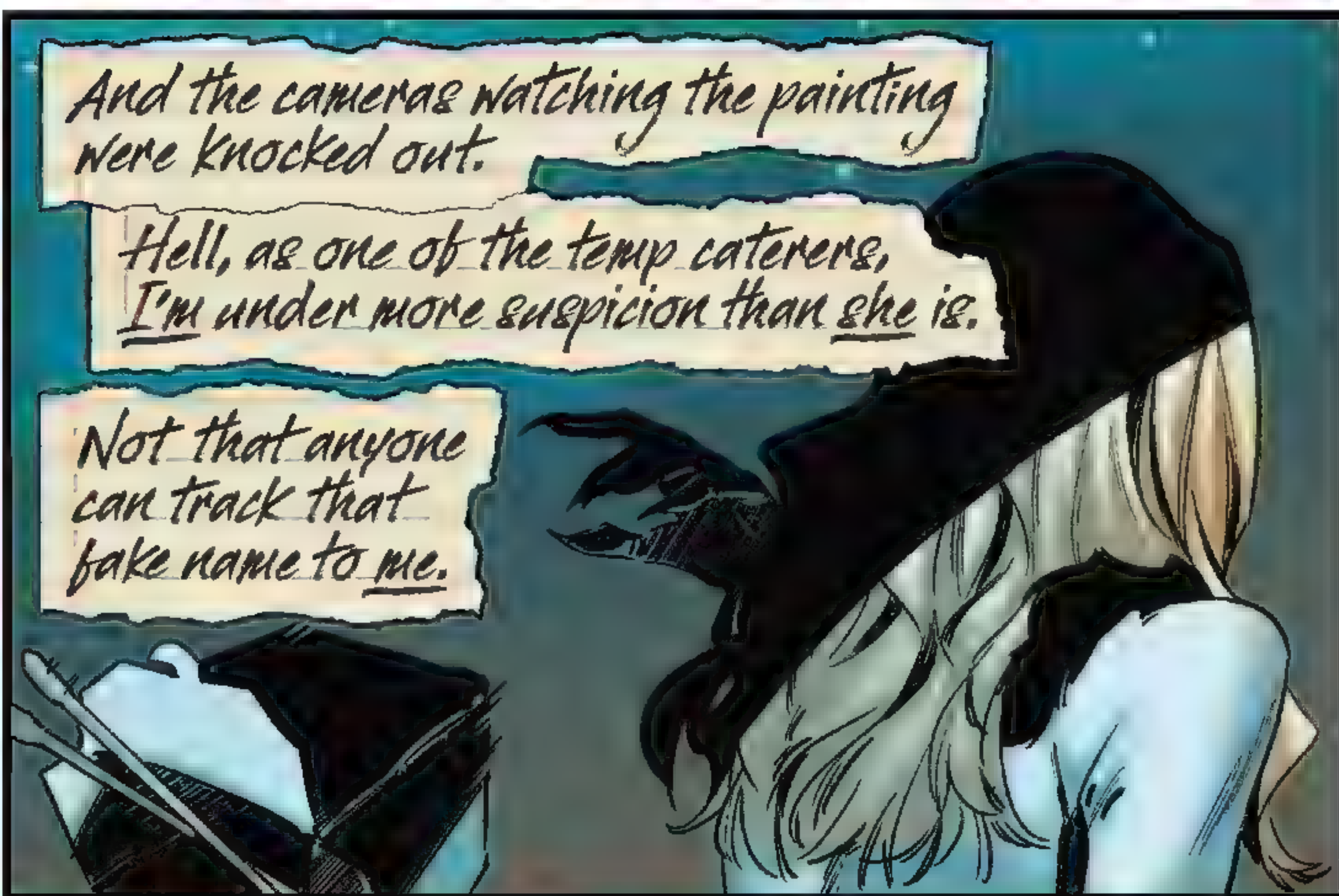
SPIDER-MAN WOULDN'T LET THAT HAPPEN.

ACTUALLY, HE PROBABLY *WOULD*. SPIDER-MAN IS CRAZY-SOFT ON HER. I SEEN IT ON THE INTERNET.



No warrants for her, though. No evidence.

She was on camera the whole time.



And the cameras watching the painting were knocked out.

Hell, as one of the temp caterers, I'm under more suspicion than she is.

Not that anyone can track that fake name to me.



HOW ARE YOU DOING THESE DAYS, Q.C.? YOU SEEM KIND OF... uh...INTENSE.

YOU DOING OKAY?



I TEMP HERE AND THERE. MOSTLY, I LIVE OFF THE LAND.

YOU KNOW HOW IT IS. BUST A DEALER, POCKET THE CASH. TURN DIRTY MONEY INTO FUEL FOR THE HERO GIG.



WHY
DON'T YOU
JUST...GO
HOME?

ISN'T
YOUR DAD
RICH?



LILY HOLLISTER'S
DAD IS RICH. WAS
RICH. I DON'T
KNOW.

BUT
YOU'RE LILY
HOLLISTER.

I'M NO MORE LILY
HOLLISTER THAN YOU
ARE. HELL, YOU PROBABLY
KNOW MORE ABOUT
HER THAN I DO.

I'M THE
QUEEN CAT.
"LILY HOLLISTER"
IS JUST THE NAME
OF THIS BODY'S
PREVIOUS
TENANT.



I DON'T
REMEMBER ANYTHING
FROM BEFORE. IT MIGHT
AS WELL HAVE HAPPENED
TO SOMEONE ELSE.

IT DID
HAPPEN TO
SOMEONE
ELSE.

I DON'T
KNOW, Q.C.
THAT DOESN'T
SOUND...
HEALTHY.



IT'S NOT.
MY SENSE OF
IDENTITY IS... IT'S
FRAGILE.

THAT'S WHY
I NEED TO GET
THE BLACK CAT.
I PUT HER AWAY, AND
EVERYTHING'S OKAY.
THEN THE NAME IS ALL
MINE. THEN I'M
SECURE.

I JUST NEED
TO CATCH HER
RED-HANDED.



I NEED
PROOF.

4 YANCY ST. LATER.

There's always people around 4 Yancy St.

Rubbernecking, trying to get a glimpse of the Fantastic Four.

Especially after a lockdown event.

That's not why I was there.

I was there for her.

I was there because of this photo of the Black Cat and Johnny Storm just before the lockdown.

The caterers from the party.

The big lug on the gurney and the little jerk. Her goons. Did she rip off the F4?

And that was the security guy...

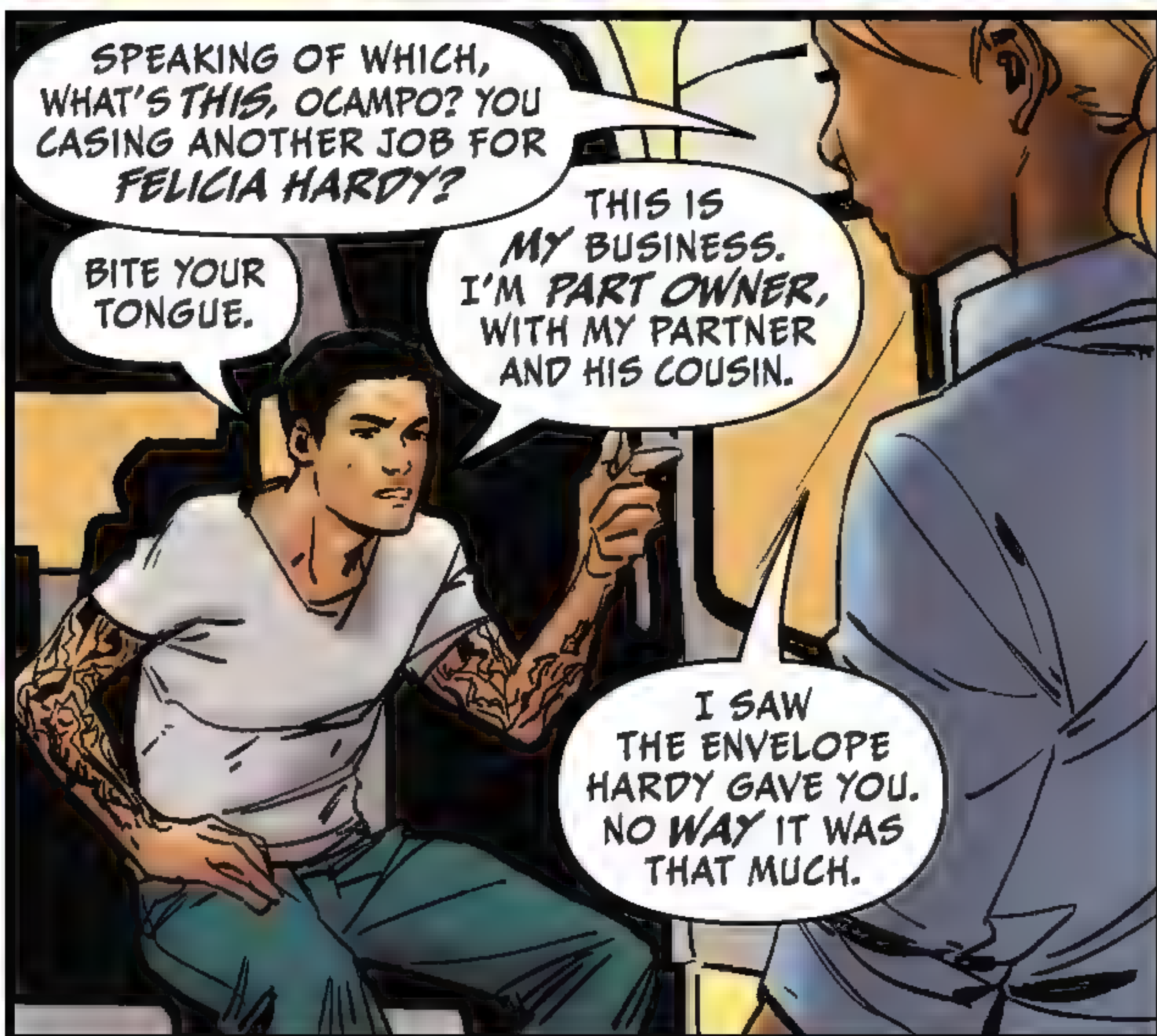
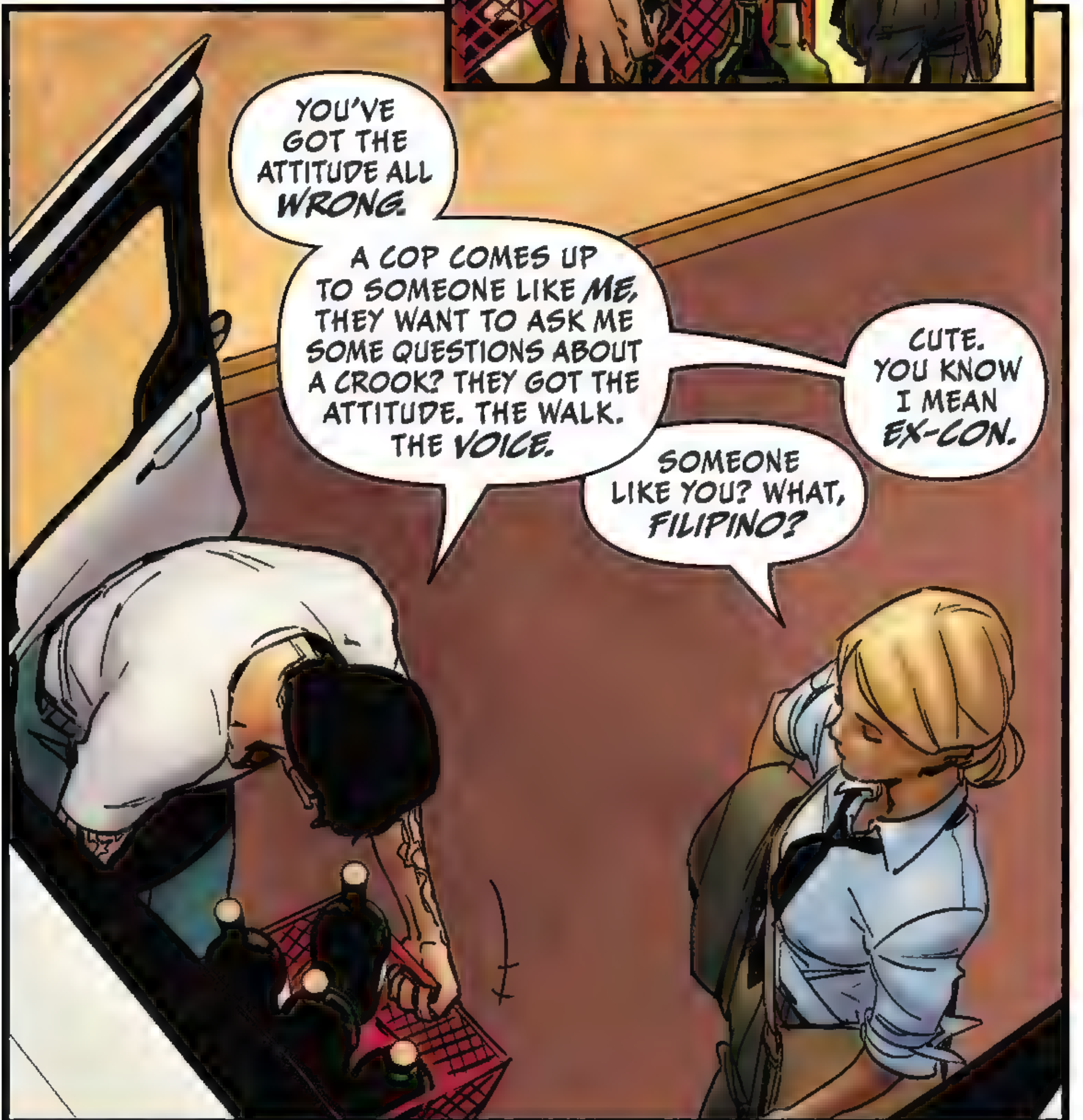
Was he part of her crew too? Was that his cut?

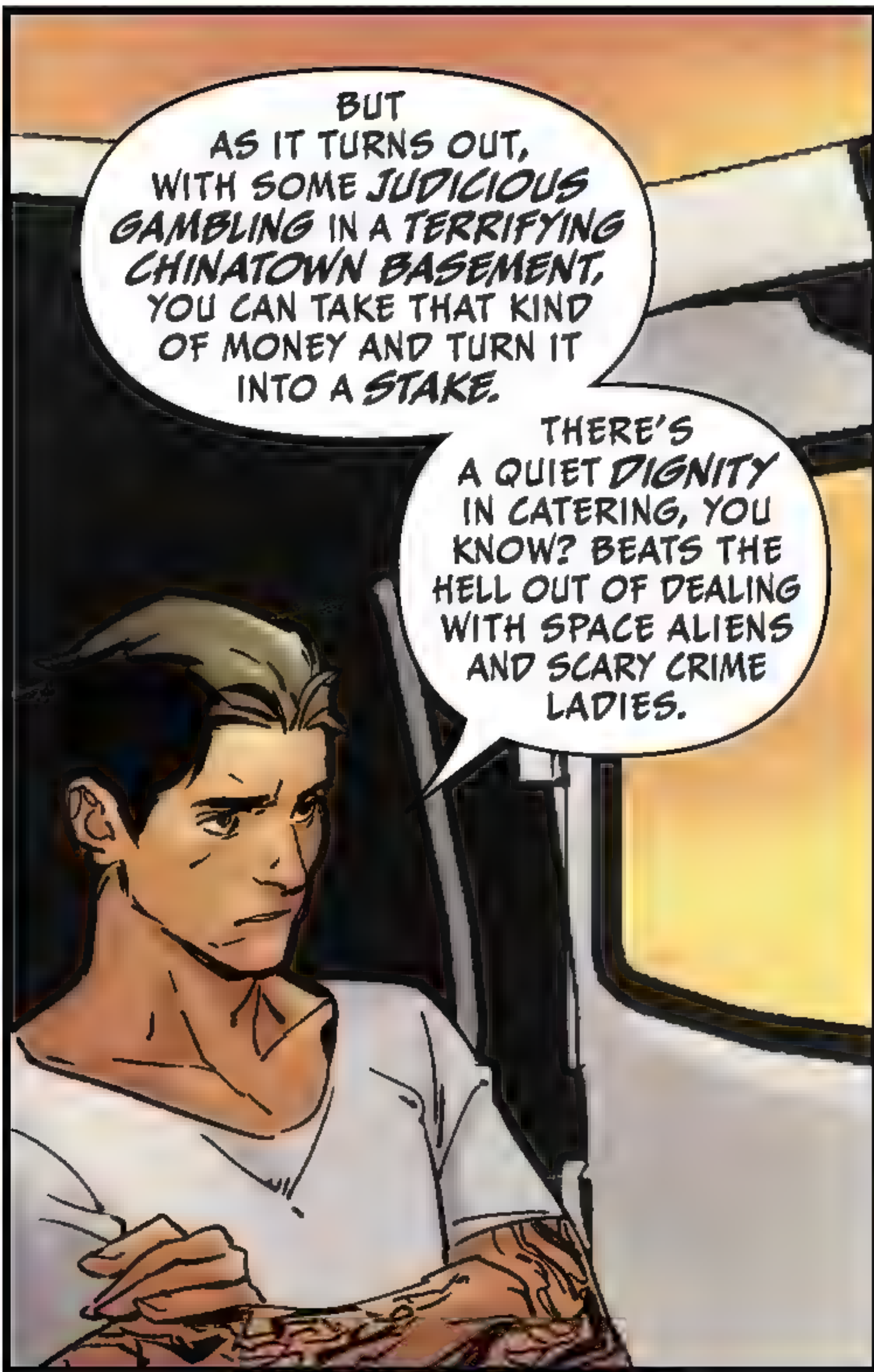
The old guy, I didn't recognize.

A lot of questions.

Nothing in the way of answers.

Yet.





BUT AS IT TURNS OUT, WITH SOME **JUDICIOUS GAMBLING** IN A **TERRIFYING CHINATOWN BASEMENT**, YOU CAN TAKE THAT KIND OF MONEY AND TURN IT INTO A **STAKE**.

THERE'S A **QUIET DIGNITY** IN **CATERING**, YOU KNOW? BEATS THE HELL OUT OF DEALING WITH **SPACE ALIENS** AND **SCARY CRIME LADIES**.



SO WHAT DO YOU WANT **HARDY** FOR? SHE DO YOU **DIRTY**?

IT'S SOMETHING I NEED TO **DO**.

I'VE BEEN THERE. YOU WANT MY **ADVICE**?

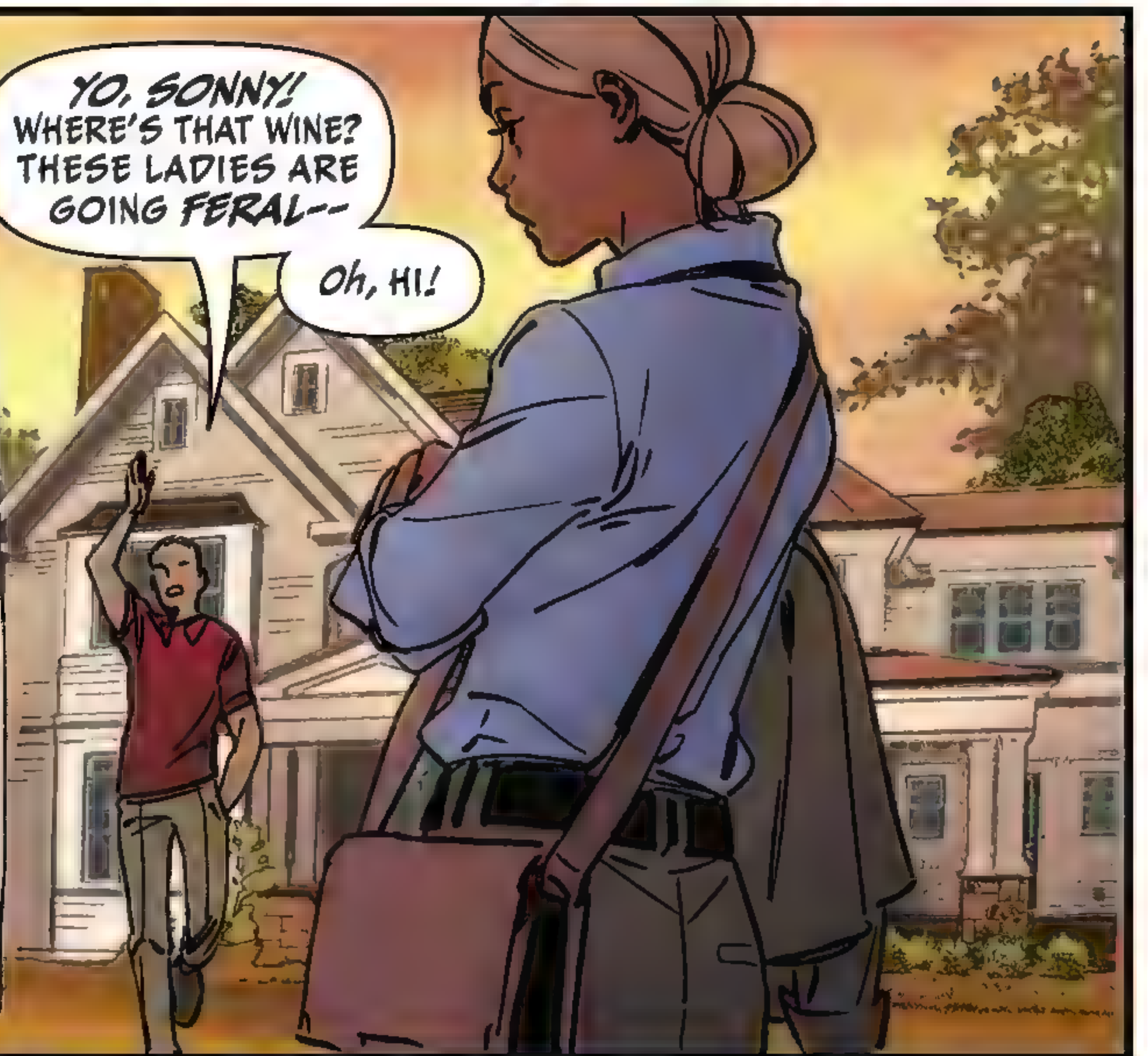


DROP IT. LET IT GO.

SHE'S TOO **GOOD** AT THIS. SHE'LL HAVE YOU **RUNNING AROUND** IN **CIRCLES** WHILE SHE EATS HER **FANCY KITSUNE TAKEOUT**.



YOU FIGURE THAT OUT AND YOU'RE STILL IN ONE PIECE? LOOK ME UP AND I'LL SET YOU UP WITH A **JOB**.



YO, SONNY! WHERE'S THAT **WINE**? THESE **LADIES** ARE GOING **FERAL**--

Oh, **HI!**



MAYBE YOU **FAILED**, **OCAMPO**...

...BUT I'M **MORE** THAN SOME **WASHED-UP EX-CON**, **EX-SECURITY GUY**. I'M A **HERO**.

SEE YOU **AROUND**.



WHO WAS THAT **BABE**?

SOMEONE AFTER **HARDY**.

HARDY? HA! **GOOD LUCK**.

COME ON, **KEVIN**. LET'S **FEED** THESE **LADIES**.

LATER

Ocampo was useless.

But then I remembered
the Black Cat's goons.

When I saw them on Yancy
Street, they were dressed
as food-delivery guys.

Ocampo had mentioned sushi from
Kitsune Food Co. The goons must
have been delivering something.

So with that one shaky lead,
I staked out a sushi restaurant.

(My stomach rumbling the whole time.)

I was getting desperate. The Black Cat had
gone to ground after the Yancy Street gig.

If she was working, I didn't
know anything about it.

There was rumbling that she and some scary
people were at odds. That she had left the
country after a fire down on the docks.

And then the Stark
thing happened.

Which left me up there,
on the rooftop.

Surveillance a sushi counter.

For three weeks.

Until I found him.



LATER

I followed him
to New Jersey.



They were working out
of a motel in Paramus.

I didn't see her,
but I could feel her.

Then the sky turned black and the
world fell apart. But I knew she
was still there. She was working.



So I kept watch. Comings
and goings.

The two
goons,
I knew.

But the
old guy
seemed
like the
weak link
in the
chain.



I was wrong.

He put up
one hell
of a fight.



I didn't
expect that.

But he was old.
And I wasn't going
to lose now.



Not when I
was so close to
what I wanted.

YOU
STUPID,
STUPID
GIRL!

I'LL SEE
YOU DEAD
FOR THIS!

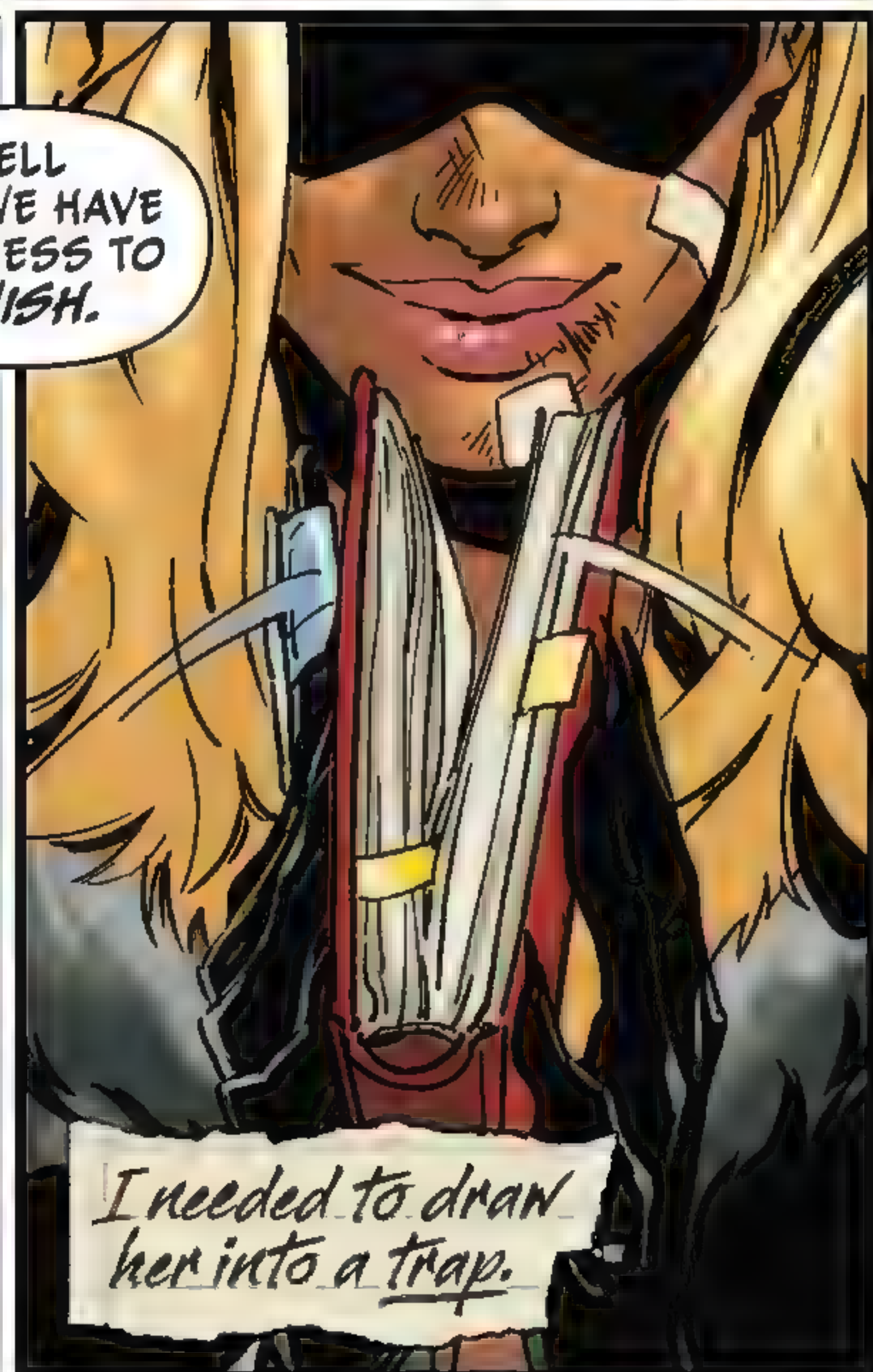


I needed to catch
her in the act.



TELL HER THE
QUEEN CAT
WILL BE IN
TOUCH.

TELL
HER WE HAVE
BUSINESS TO
FINISH.



I needed to draw
her into a trap.







GOT TO GET
UP HIGH--

--GOT TO
GET AWAY--



WELL,
HEY THERE,
"QUEEN
CAT".

=Heff=

=Heff=



I HEAR WE HAVE
BUSINESS.



HOW.

EVERYTHING
I WENT
THROUGH TO
GET THOSE
THINGS...

...YOU THINK I
WOULDN'T *CHIP* THEM?
I COULD TRACK THEM
IF THEY WERE ON
THE *MOON*.

WE WERE
ON YOU AS
SOON AS YOU
STOPPED
MOVING.

THAT'S FINE.
I WANTED TO GET
YOU, AND YOU'RE
HERE.

=Kaff=

ALL
ACCORDING
TO PLAN.



SO
WHAT'S
THIS ALL
ABOUT?

ODESSA
COOKED YOU
UP AS...WHAT, A
REPLACEMENT
FOR ME?

ODESSA?
YOU THINK I'M
WORKING FOR
RUSSIANS?

RUSSIANS?
WHAT ARE
YOU TALKING
ABOUT?



LET'S
START
OVER.

WHAT THE
HELL IS YOUR
GAME, "QUEEN CAT"?
BECAUSE YOU'RE
BITING MY *STYLE* AND
MESSING WITH MY
SCHEMES.



I'M A
HERO.

YOU'RE A
VILLAIN.

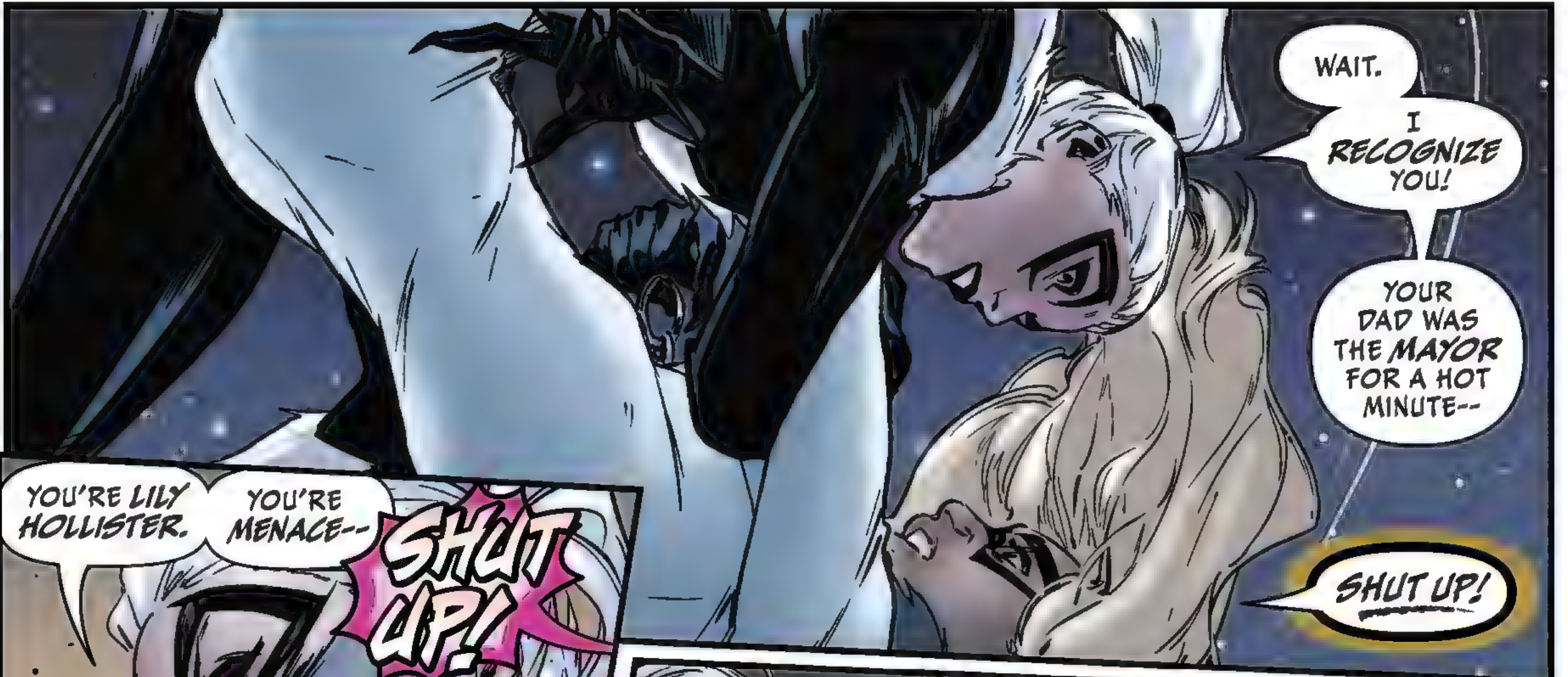
AM NOT.

AND I'M
GOING TO
PUT YOU IN
JAIL.



BETTER
THAN YOU HAVE
TRIED.

BUT THAT
LESSON'S
A PAINFUL
ONE.



WAIT.

I
RECOGNIZE
YOU!

YOUR
DAD WAS
THE *MAYOR*
FOR A HOT
MINUTE--

SHUT UP!

YOU'RE LILY
HOLLISTER.

YOU'RE
MENACE--

**SHUT
UP!
FUD!**

=Whuff!=-

WELL,
WELL,
WELL.

THIS IS INTERESTING.
LITTLE RICH GIRL TURNS
FREAKY VILLAIN...
TURNS HERO?

WAIT,
DIDN'T YOU
DIE?



GOOD FOR
YOU. RADICAL
RE-INVENTION--
I'M INTO IT.

SO WHY
ARE YOU
BUGGING
ME?

LILY
HOLLISTER
WAS IN POLICE
CUSTODY FOR
HER CRIMES.

THE *GOBLIN
KING* BLEW UP
THE CAR TRYING
TO RESCUE HER,
KNOCKED HER
INTO THE
RIVER.

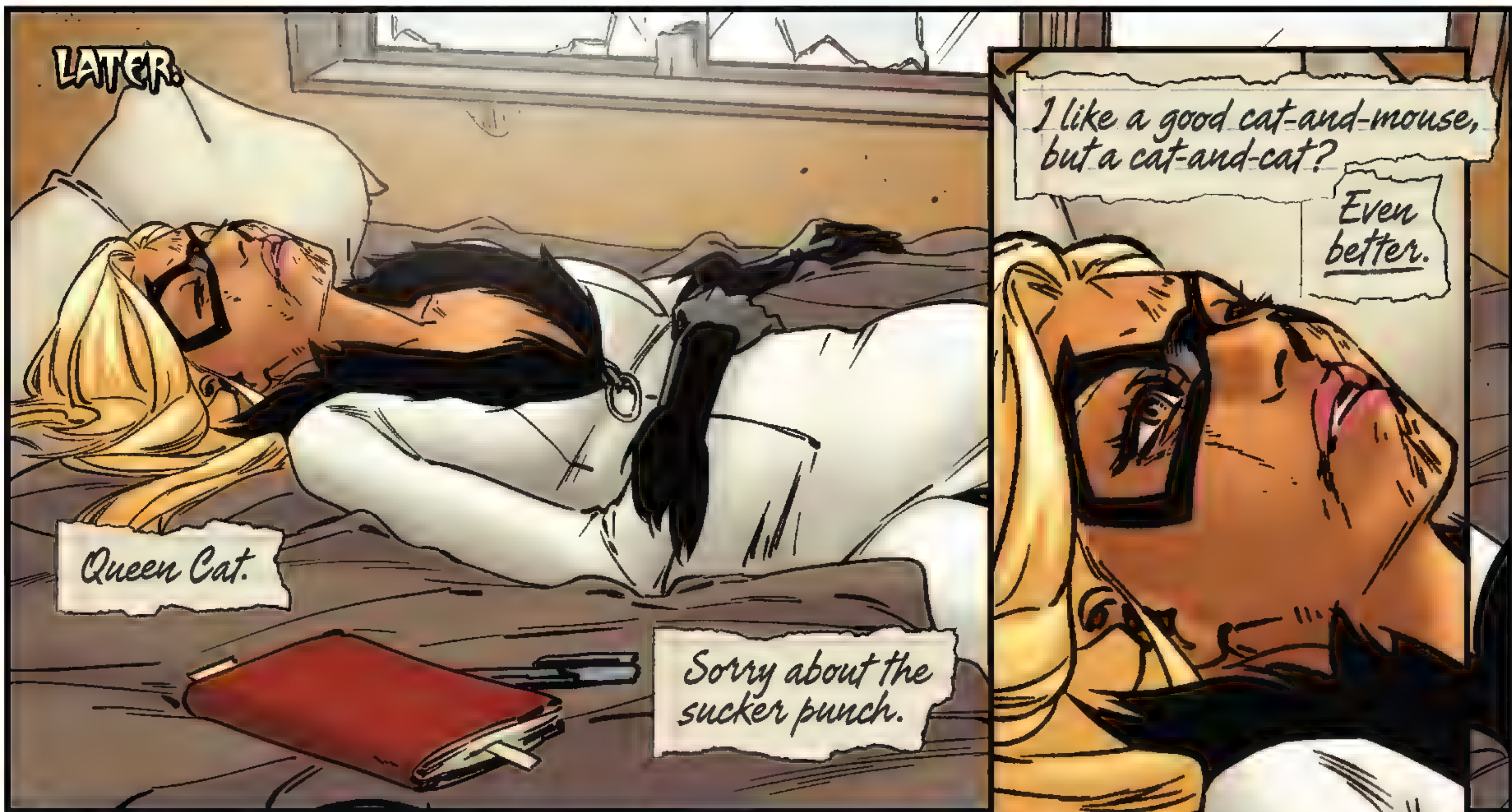
SHE DIED
THERE. I'M WHO
CLIMBED OUT.

THOK!

--Utt!







LATER

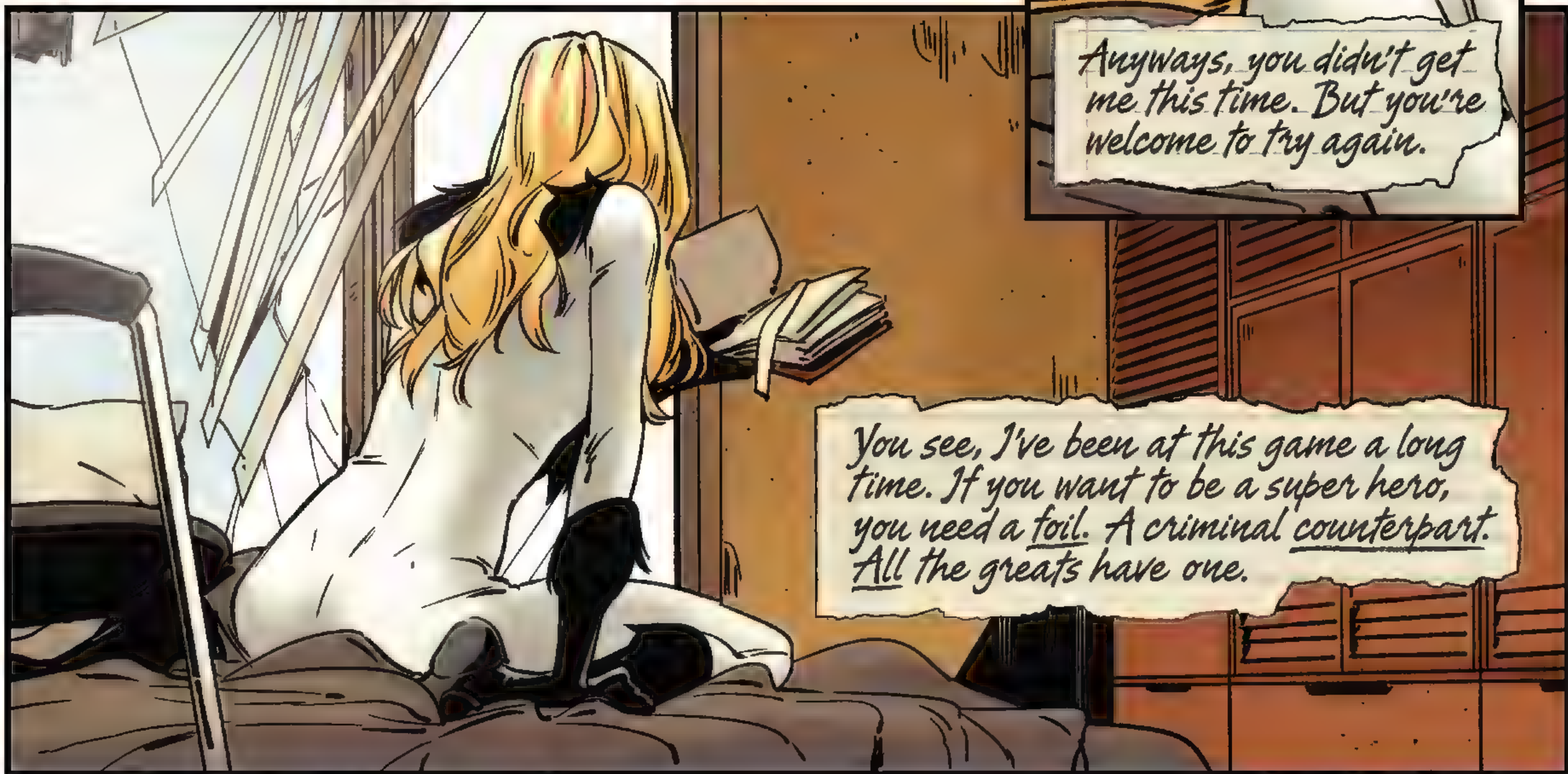
Queen Cat.

Sorry about the
sucker punch.

I like a good cat-and-mouse,
but a cat-and-cat?

Even
better.

Anyways, you didn't get
me this time. But you're
welcome to try again.



You see, I've been at this game a long
time. If you want to be a super hero,
you need a foil. A criminal counterpart.
All the greats have one.



Spider-Man and Venom.
Mr. Fantastic and Dr. Doom.
Wolverine and Sabretooth.

Tony Stark and bourbon.

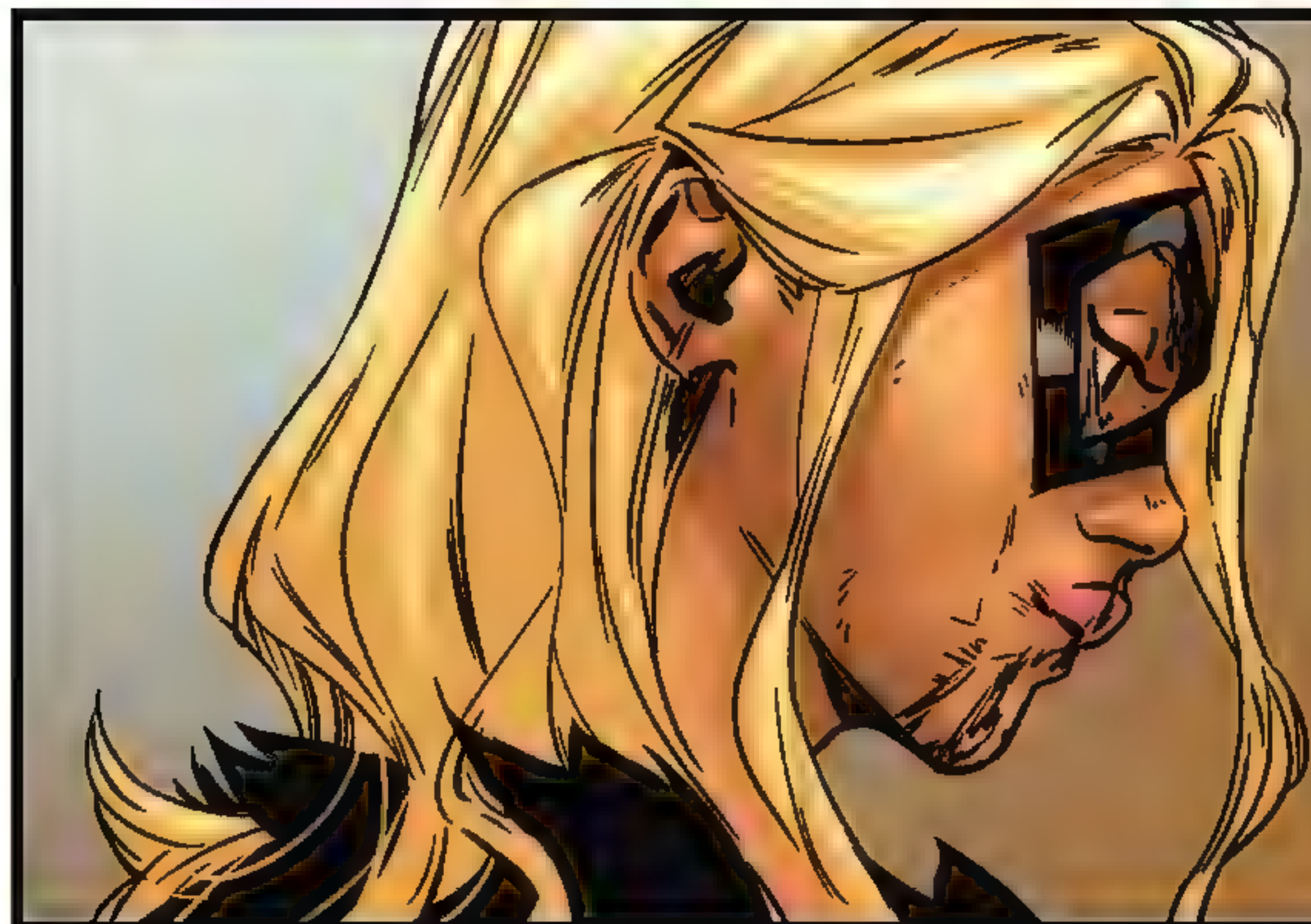


And us? Queen Cat and the Black Cat. Two sides of the same coin. Light and dark.

So catch me if you can, because this game has begun.

See you on the rooftops.

Love,
The Black Cat

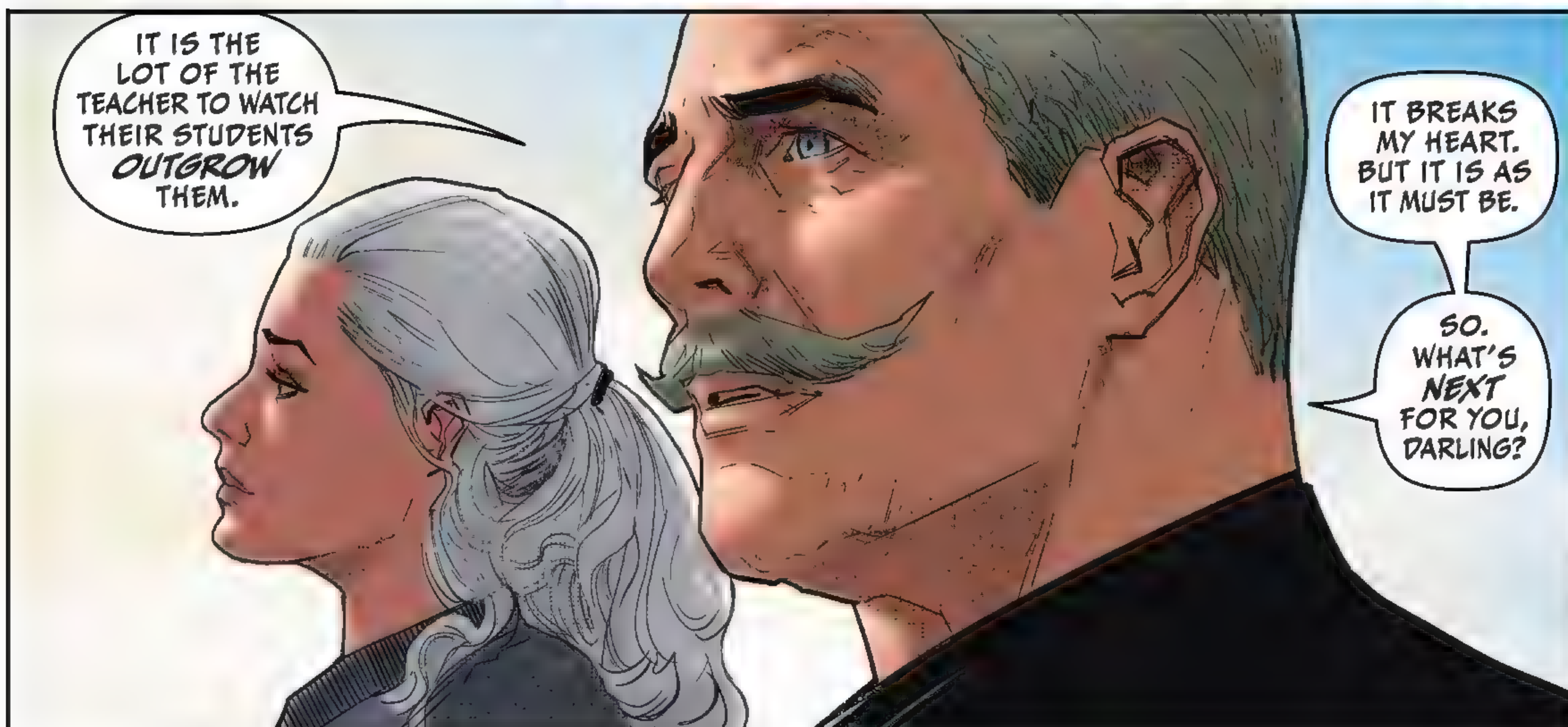
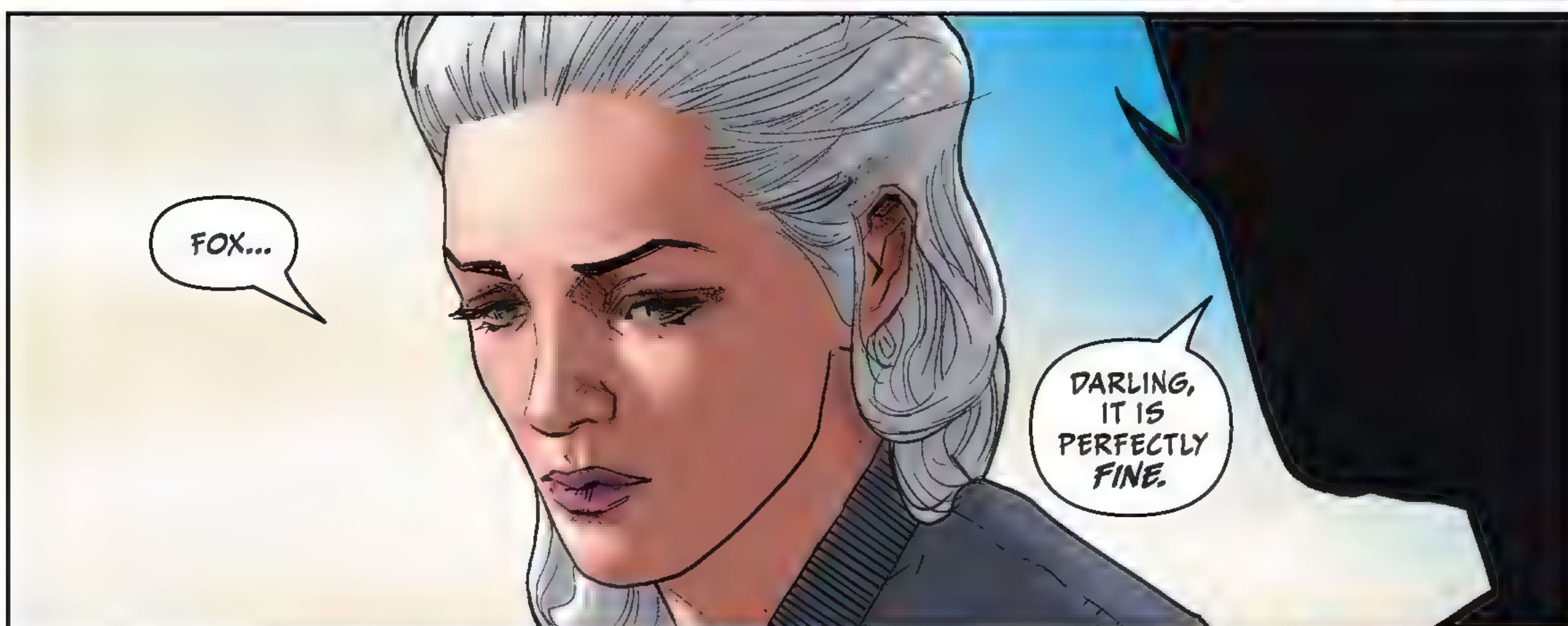
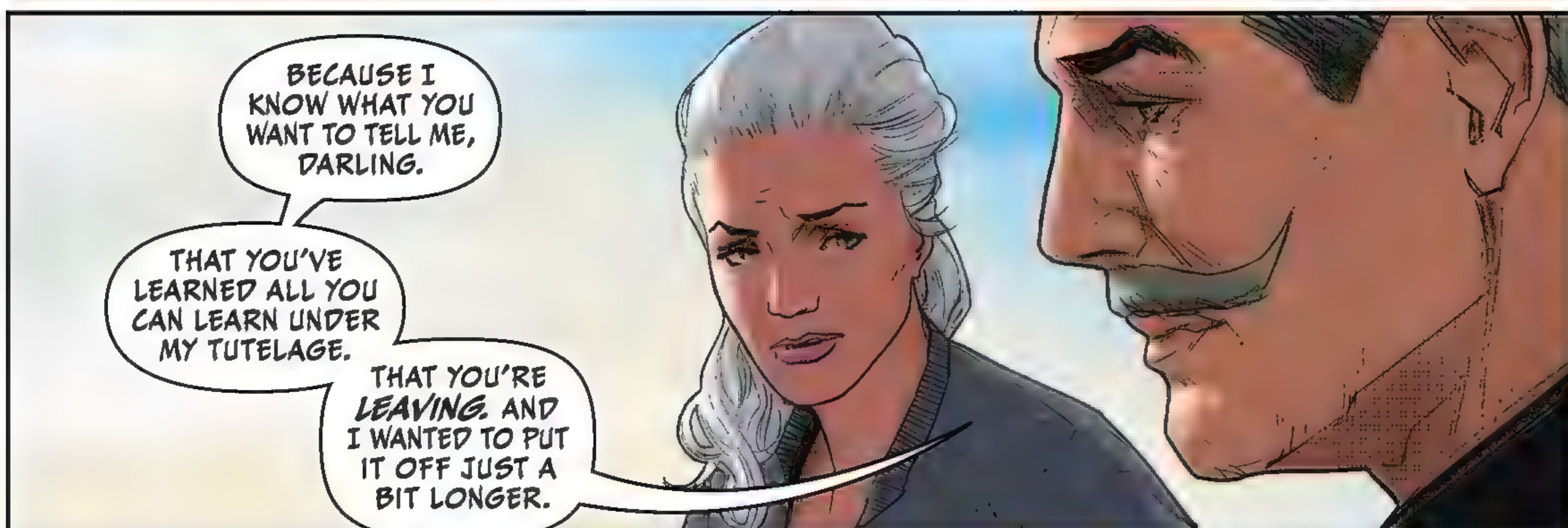


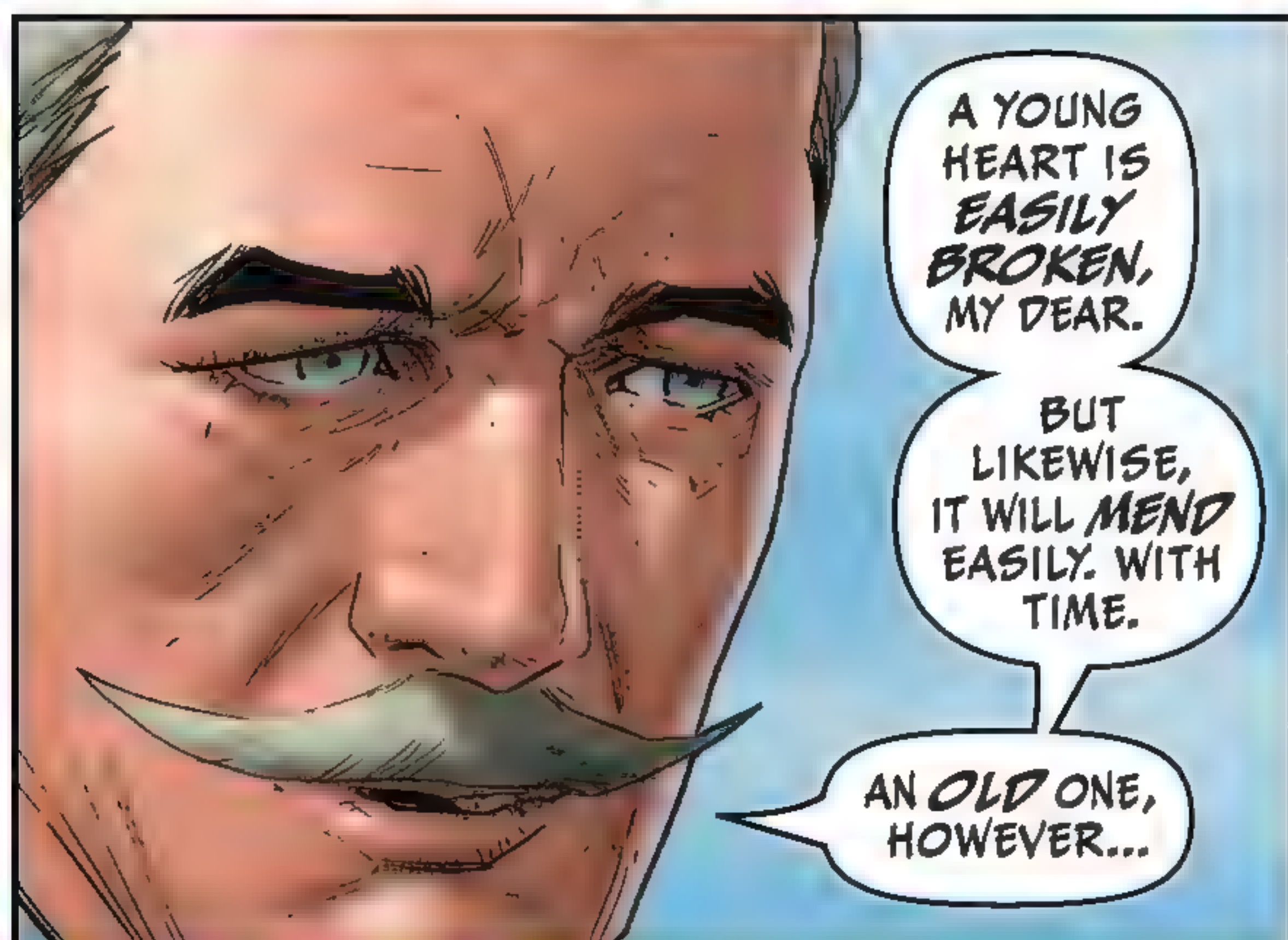
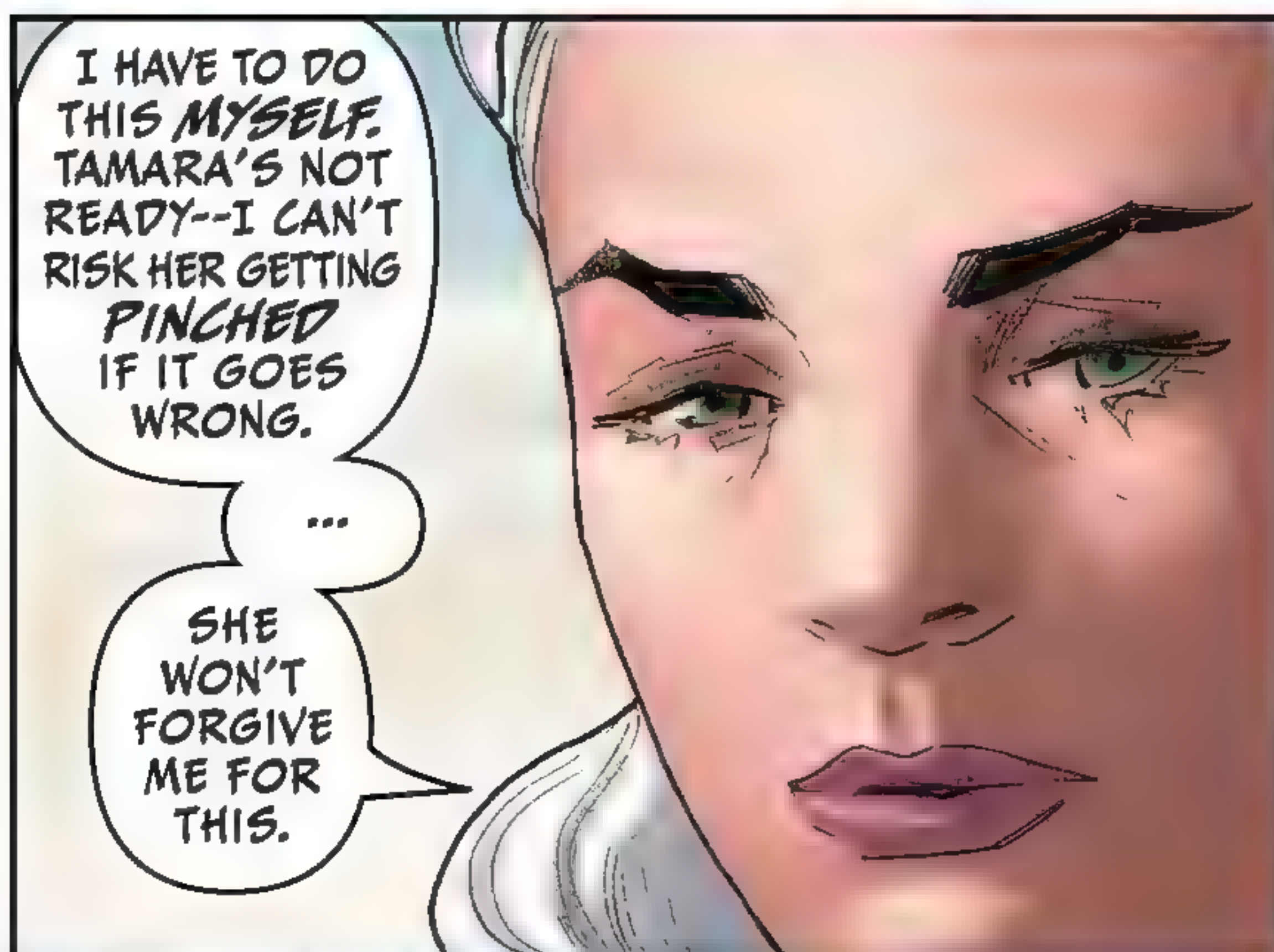
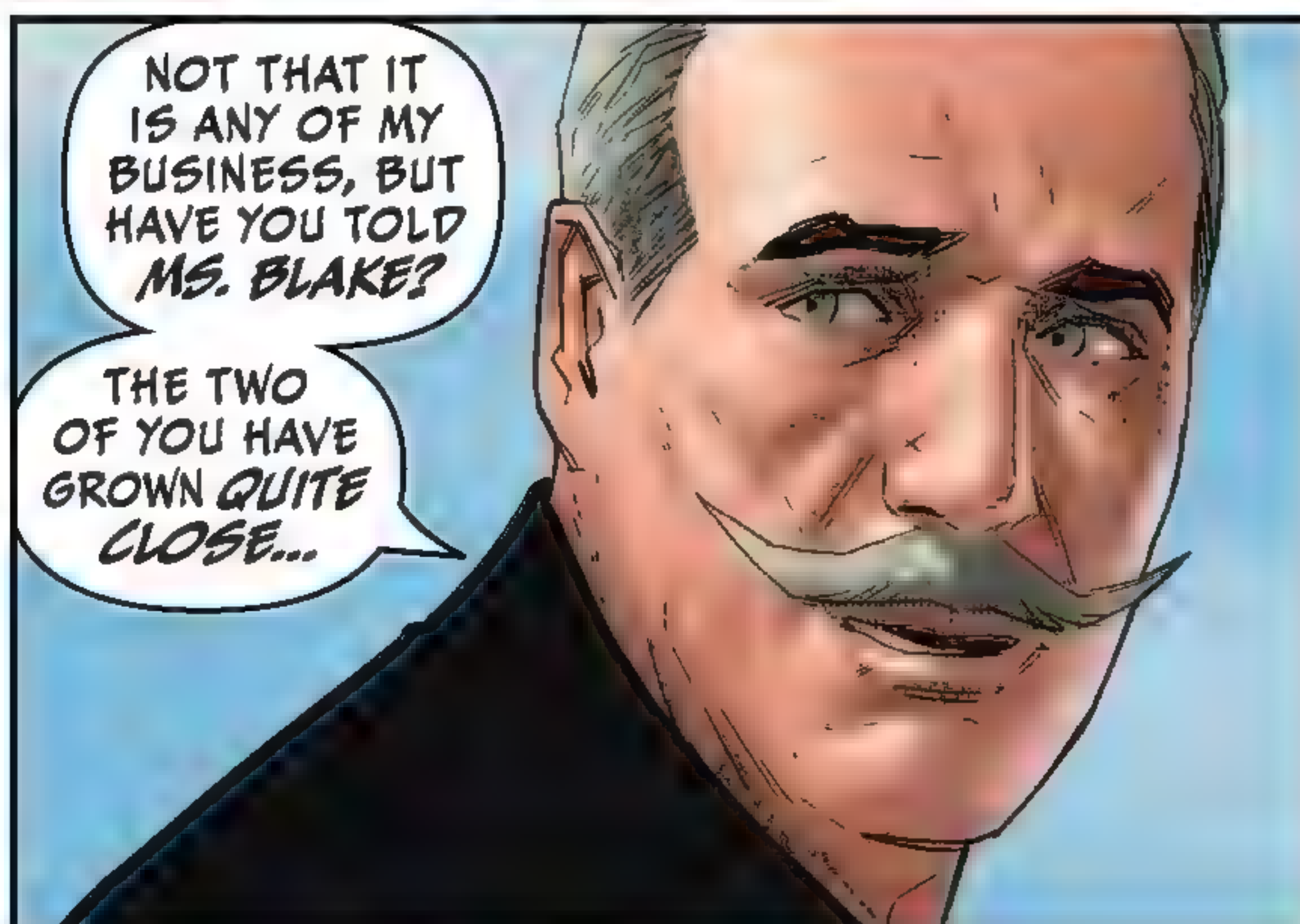
SEE
YOU ON THE
ROOFTOPS,
BLACK CAT.

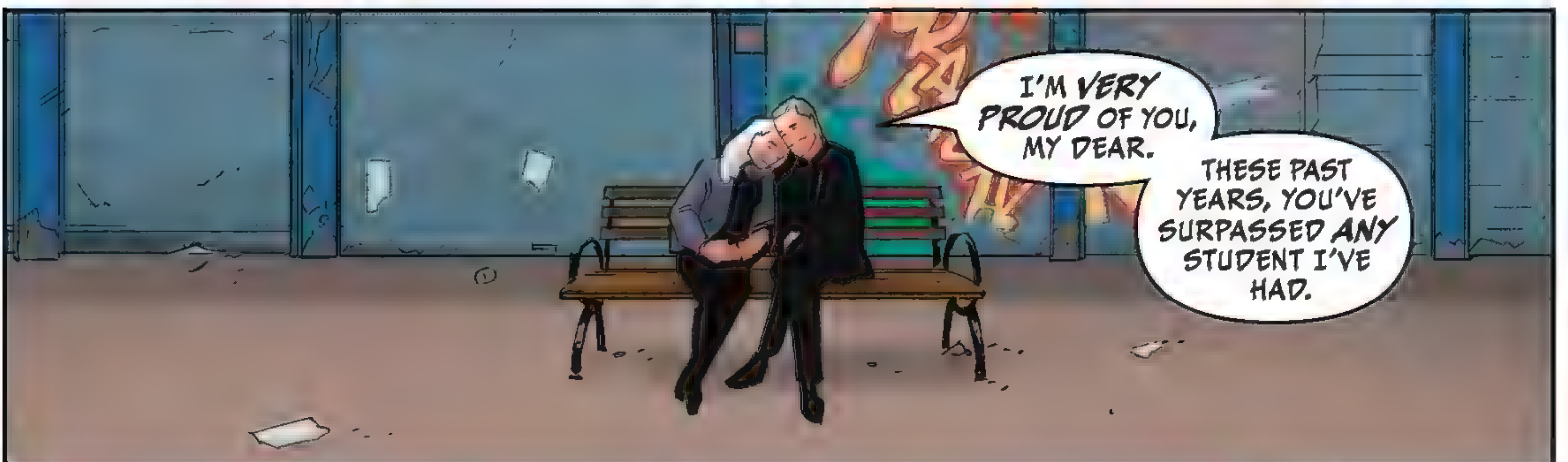


CONEY ISLAND.
THEN.









RIGHT NOW.

ALL RIGHT,
BOYS, THIS
IS IT.

"THE ONE
FOR ALL THE
MARBLES."

"WHAT WE'VE
BEEN WORKING
FOR THIS
WHOLE TIME."

"LET'S
BREAK INTO
THE GUILD'S
VAULTS."

"DOC, BRUNO, YOU TWO STAY TOPSIDE WITH THE RANDALL DEVICE."

"THE FOX AND I WILL TAKE THE DIMENSIONAL RESONATOR--THE KEY--WHERE IT NEEDS TO GO AND RUN CABLE BACK TO YOU."

"WHEN WE'RE IN PLACE, WE SIGNAL, YOU ACTIVATE THE DEVICE, OPEN THE PORTAL, AND SHOVEL THE LOOT INTO THE OTHER TRUCK."

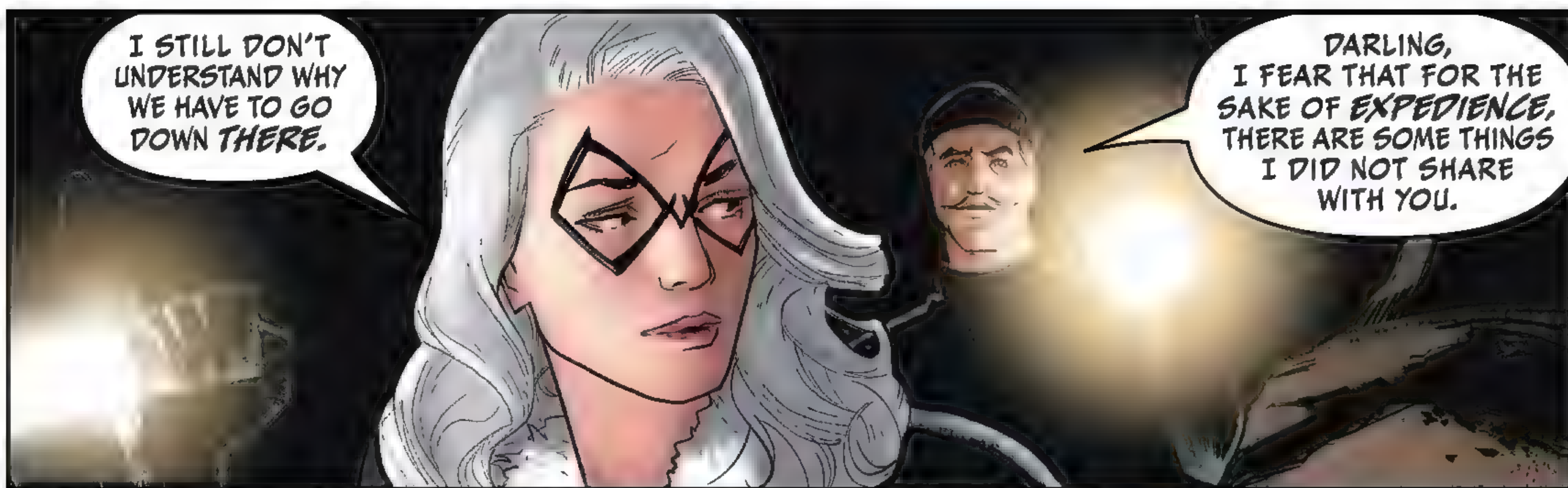
"WE DO THIS RIGHT, AND WE DRIVE AWAY WITH AN ENTIRE TRUCKLOAD OF SPOILS."

"AND MORE IMPORTANTLY..."

"WE DO SOMETHING NO ONE HAS EVER DONE."

"WE RIP OFF THE NEW YORK THIEVES GUILD."

HOW DO YOU LIKE ME NOW, ODESSA?



I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY WE HAVE TO GO DOWN *THERE*.

DARLING, I FEAR THAT FOR THE SAKE OF *EXPEDIENCE*, THERE ARE SOME THINGS I DID NOT SHARE WITH YOU.



WELL, I DON'T LOVE *THAT*.

THE GUILD'S VAULTS AREN'T EXACTLY VAULTS.

THAT IS TO SAY, THEY DO POSSESS EXTREME AMOUNTS OF *WEALTH*.

BUT WHEN *ODESSA DRAKE* FIRST DECODED THE PAINTINGS OF ORLANDO, IT WAS NOT MERELY TO FIND A PLACE TO *HIDE* HER LOOT.



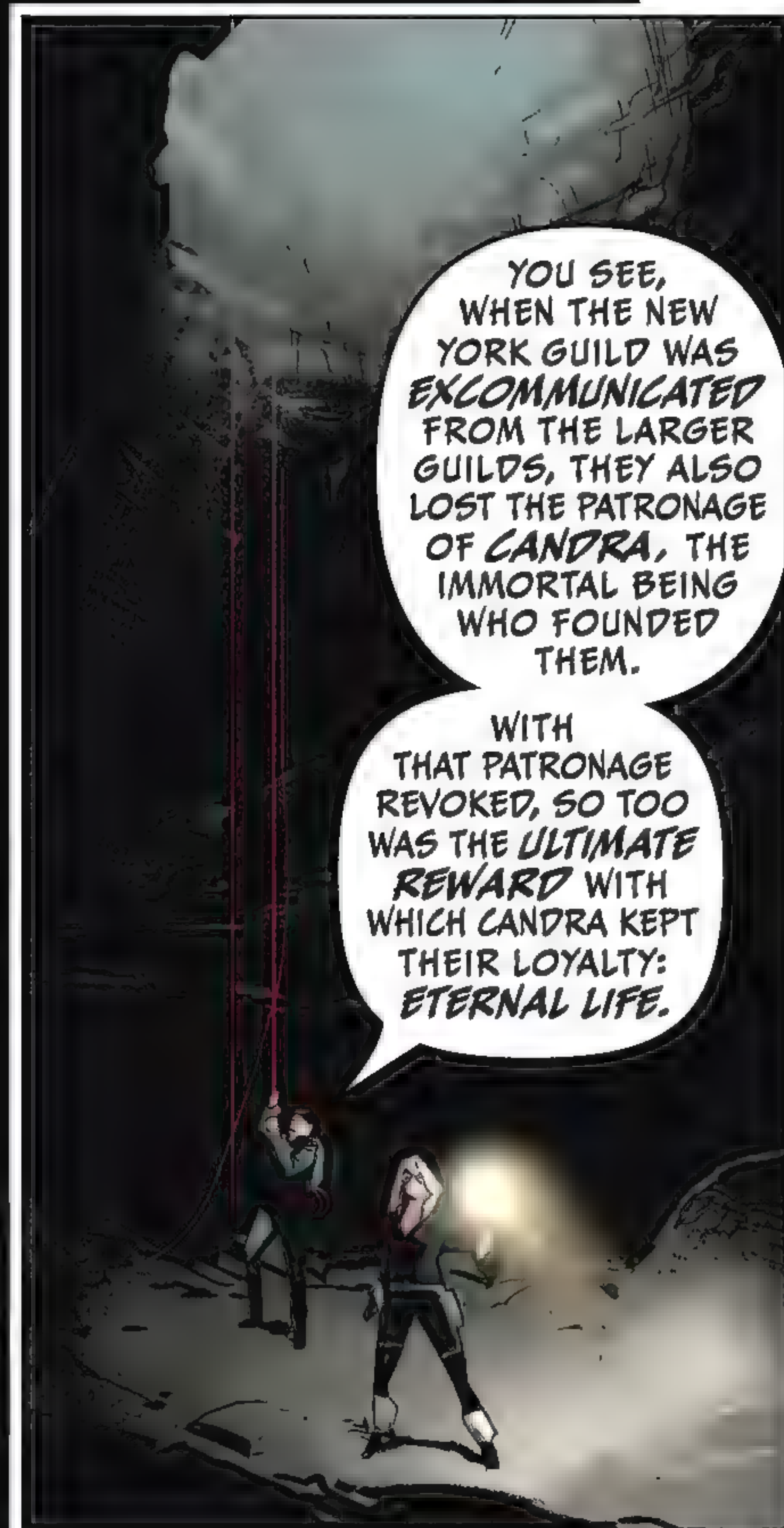
RATHER, SHE DID SO TO MAKE CONTACT WITH THE *DENIZEN* OF THAT STRANGE DIMENSION.

Uh-oh...

AN ENTITY CALLED THE *GILDED SAINT*. AN ALIEN GOD OF *WEALTH* AND *DEATH*.

FOX, THIS IS A PRETTY *BIG* OMISSION.

FORGIVE ME, DARLING.



YOU SEE, WHEN THE NEW YORK GUILD WAS *EXCOMMUNICATED* FROM THE LARGER GUILDS, THEY ALSO LOST THE PATRONAGE OF *CANDRA*, THE IMMORTAL BEING WHO FOUNDED THEM.

WITH THAT PATRONAGE REVOKED, SO TOO WAS THE *ULTIMATE REWARD* WITH WHICH *CANDRA* KEPT THEIR LOYALTY: *ETERNAL LIFE*.



CASTILLO DRAKE FOUND THE WAY TO A NEW PATRON: THE GILDED SAINT.

AFTER HIS DEATH, ODESSA CONTINUED HIS WORK.

AND SHE MADE A DEAL WITH THE CREATURE, A CREATURE OF ENORMOUS AND STRANGE POWER.



THE GUILD WOULD PAY THE GILDED SAINT TRIBUTE. TEN PERCENT OF ANYTHING STOLEN IN THE CITY.

IN RETURN, IT WOULD GRANT THE INNER CIRCLE OF THE GUILD THAT WHICH THEY COULD NOT HAVE, COULD NOT STEAL.

IMMORTALITY.

TO NEVER GROW OLD, TO NEVER SICKEN.

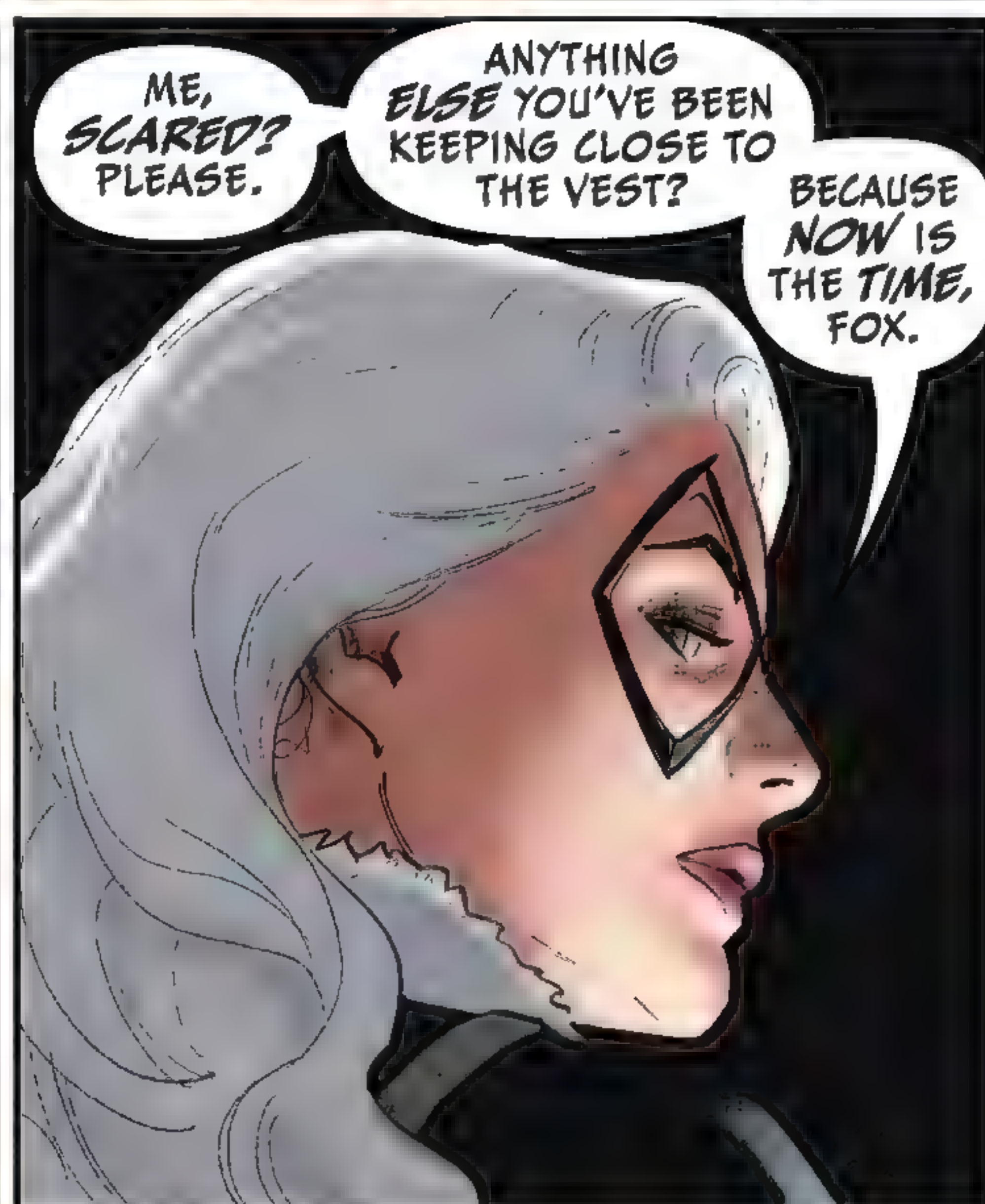


AND WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME THIS BEFORE?

ARE WE GOING TO HAVE TO FIGHT THIS SAINT?

NO.

I KEPT IT TO MYSELF... BECAUSE I DID NOT WISH TO FRIGHTEN YOU OR YOUR MEN WHEN WE WERE SO CLOSE.



ME, SCARED? PLEASE.

ANYTHING ELSE YOU'VE BEEN KEEPING CLOSE TO THE VEST?

BECAUSE NOW IS THE TIME, FOX.



"YES."



I'M DYING.





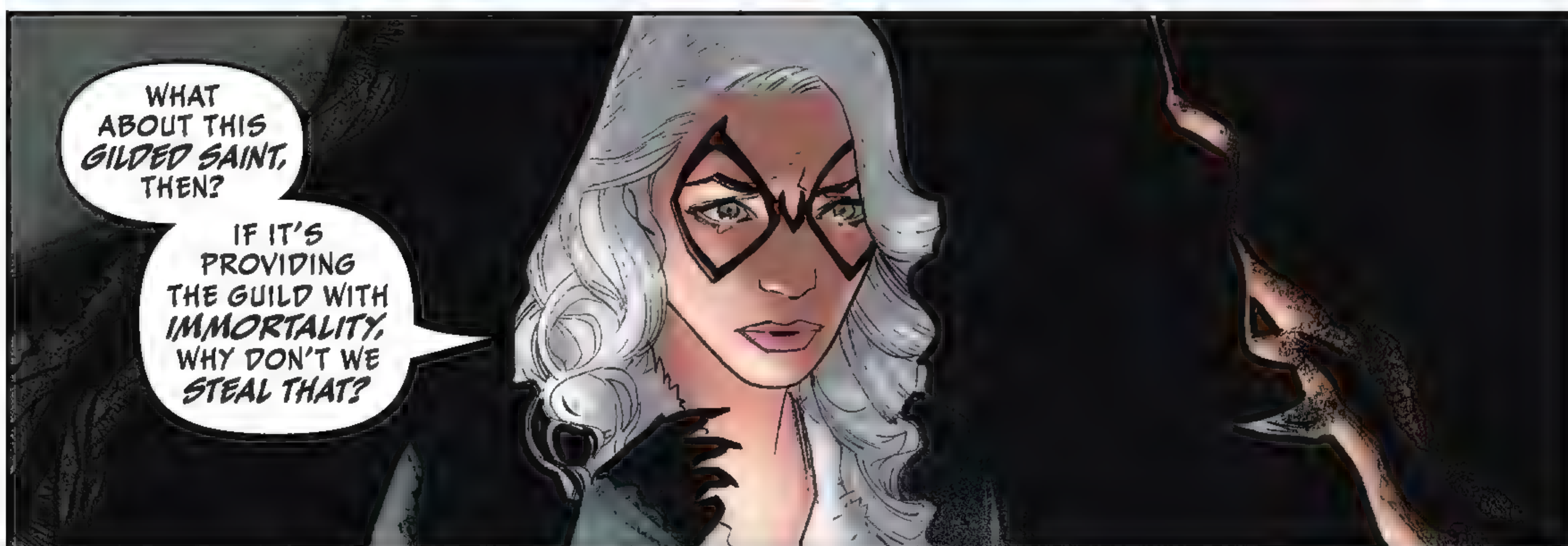
EITHER
IMPOSSIBLE
TO SOURCE...OR
SIMPLY NOT
ENOUGH.

NO. STRANGE
CAN'T HELP ME.
NO ONE CAN.

LISTEN,
DOCTOR STRANGE
OWES ME ONE--



"I TRACKED DOWN THE
DREAD YI YANG, AND SHE
SENT ME AWAY. ZHENG
ZHU IS DEAD. I HAVE
NO GODS OR DEMONS
TO BARGAIN WITH."



WHAT
ABOUT THIS
GILDED SAINT,
THEN?

IF IT'S
PROVIDING
THE GUILD WITH
IMMORTALITY,
WHY DON'T WE
STEAL THAT?



FROM
WHAT I'VE
READ, THE SAINT
IS A CREATURE
OF LAWS AND
BARGAINS.

TO PERSUADE
IT TO BREAK ITS
CONTRACT WITH THE
GUILD WOULD REQUIRE
AN IMMENSE
TREASURE.

A PRIZE OF
INCALCULABLE
WORTH.

DARLING,
DO BELIEVE
ME...

"...I HAVE
CONSIDERED
EVERYTHING."

THEN.

YOU COME
BEFORE ME,
THE GREAT BEAST,
OFFERING YOUR
SERVICE IN EXCHANGE
FOR THE DARK
GIFT?

LIFE
ETERNAL
IN ALL THE
NIGHTS EVER
TO COME?

YES,
DREAD DRACULA.
ALLOW ME TO TURN MY
SKILLS TO YOUR WHIMS.
I ASK ONLY A PLACE
IN YOUR COURT.

Ah.
I SEE.

I THINK
NOT...

...MR.
MURRAY.

DID YOU THINK
THAT I WOULD
FORGET?

DID YOU THINK THAT
I WOULD FORGIVE YOUR
IMPERTINENCE IN MIAMI?*

GREAT
VOIVODE,
PLEASE--

*BACK IN BC (2019) #1! -LC

GO. I HAVE
SPOKEN, AND
YOU HAVE BEEN
MARKED.

NO CHILD OF
THE NIGHT WILL RISK
MY DISPLEASURE
BY AIDING YOU.

PLEASE, LET
ME MAKE IT UP
TO YOU--

I HOPE THE
TREASURES YOU
STOLE FROM ME
BROUGHT YOU
GREAT JOY.

KEEP THEM, IF
YOU POSSESS THEM
STILL. LET THEM
COMFORT YOU
AS YOU DIE

AN
OLD
MAN.



CASTILLO, YOUR FATHER, EVEN ULYSSES BLOODSTONE...

GEEZ, FOXY...

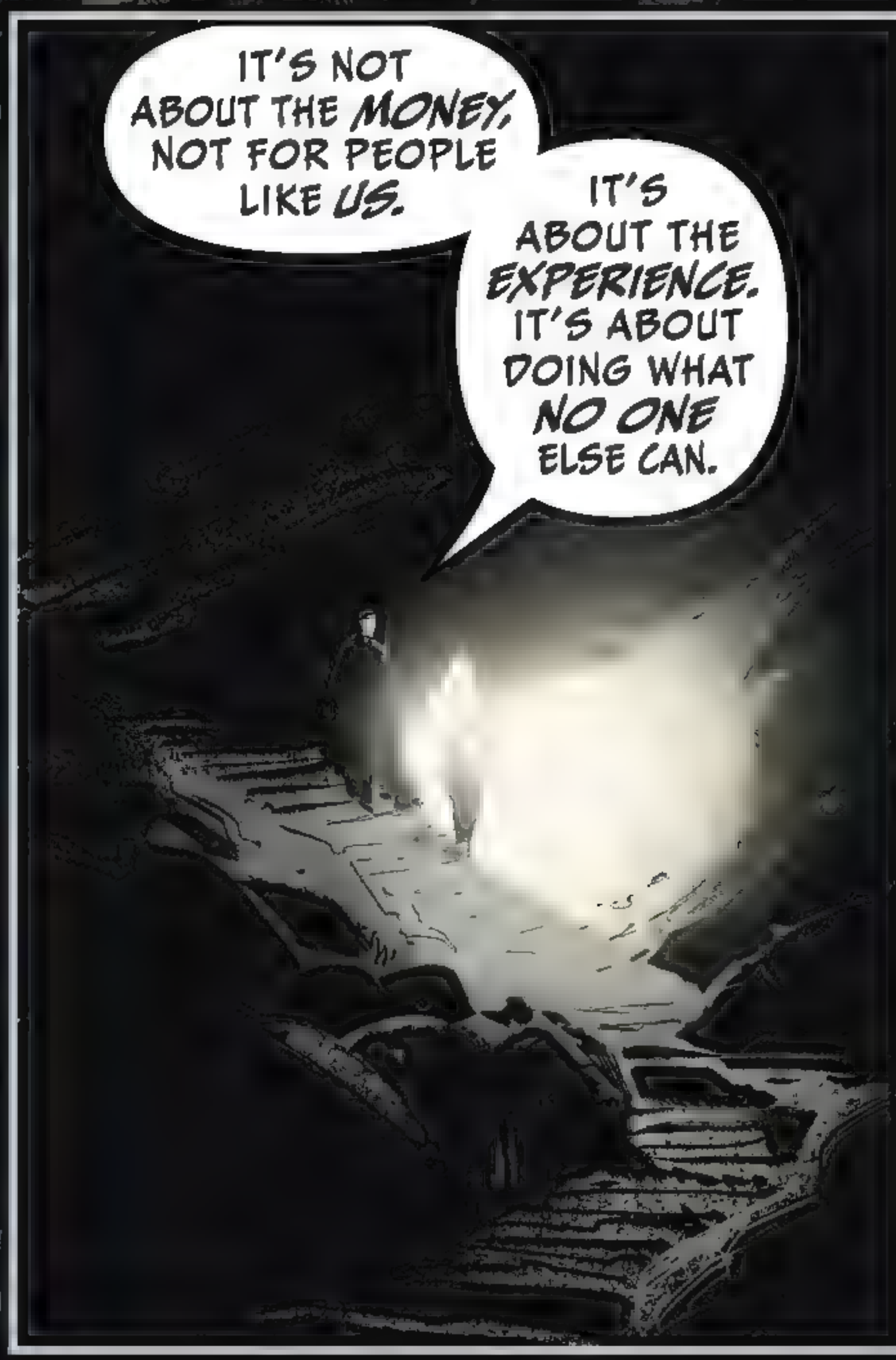
OF THE FOUR OF US WHO ROBBED DRACULA THAT NIGHT, ONLY I STILL LIVE.

AND ALLOWING ME TO CONTINUE TO LIVE ONLY TO DIE WAS REVENGE ENOUGH FOR HIM.



"NO, DARLING..."

"THIS SCORE WILL BE MY LEGACY."



IT'S NOT ABOUT THE MONEY, NOT FOR PEOPLE LIKE US.

IT'S ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE. IT'S ABOUT DOING WHAT NO ONE ELSE CAN.



"AND SHARING IT WITH YOU, THE ONLY PERSON IN THIS WORLD I CARE FOR."



ARE YOU SCARED?

THE SECRET CEMETERIES OF THE NEW YORK THIEVES.
DEEP BENEATH MANHATTAN.

OF
COURSE
I AM.

YOU'LL RECALL
THAT I AM A
PROFESSED
COWARD.

FEARING
DEATH IS HOW
I HAVE LIVED.
I WOULD DO
ANYTHING TO
AVOID IT.

WE'RE
GOING TO TALK
MORE ABOUT
THIS AFTER THE
JOB'S DONE,
FOX.

THERE'S
GOT TO BE
SOMETHING
WE CAN DO.

Brrrr...

IT IS
EERIE,
IS IT
NOT?

MY DAD'S
BURIED HERE.
SO'S CASTILLO
DRAKE.

I IMAGINE
IT'S WHERE
I'LL BE BURIED,
WHEN THE TIME
COMES.



I DON'T LIKE BEING HERE.

IT FEELS WRONG.

WHY ARE WE DOWN HERE AGAIN?



THE GILDED SAINT IS AN ULTRATERRESTRIAL ENTITY ASSOCIATED WITH WEALTH AND DEATH.

A BIT OF SYMPATHETIC VIBRATION WILL AID WITH THE DIMENSIONAL RESONATOR... HOOKING INTO THE VAULTS IT LIVES IN.

Ahhh... THERE.



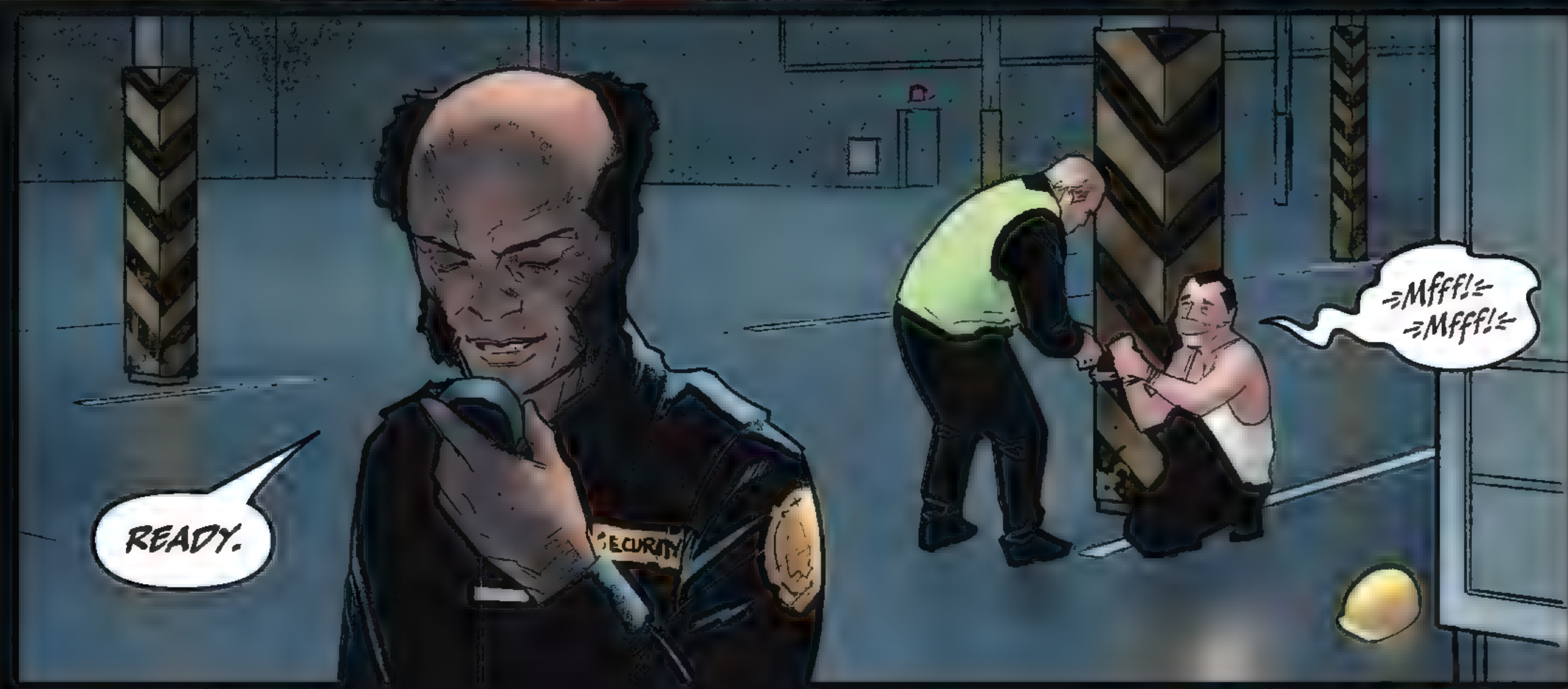
ARE YOU READY, DARLING?



BORN READY.

Beep!

BOYS?

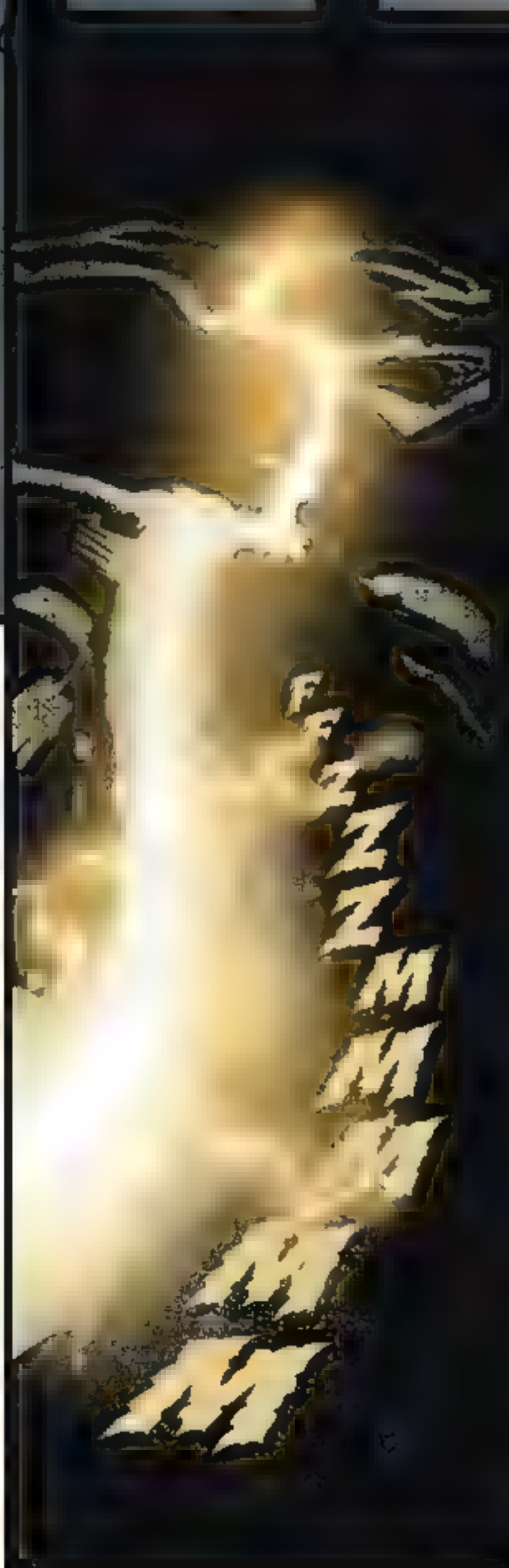
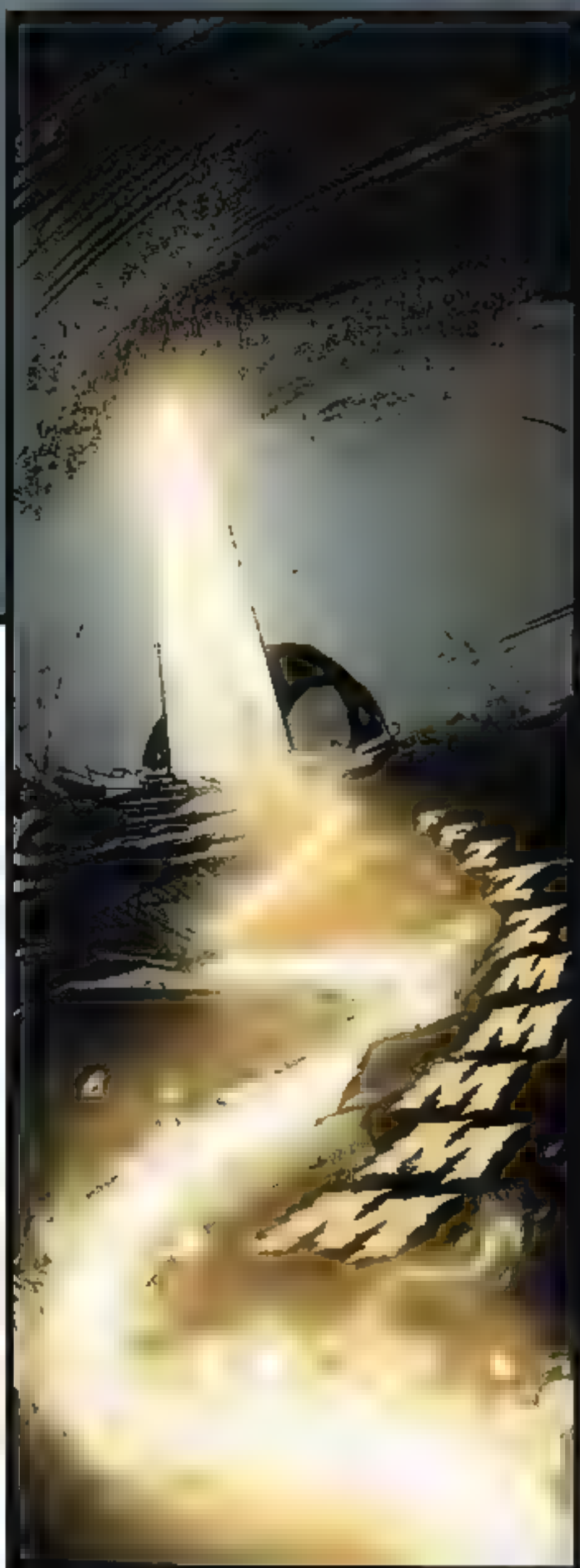


READY.

=Mfff!=
=Mfff!=



HAHAHAHA!







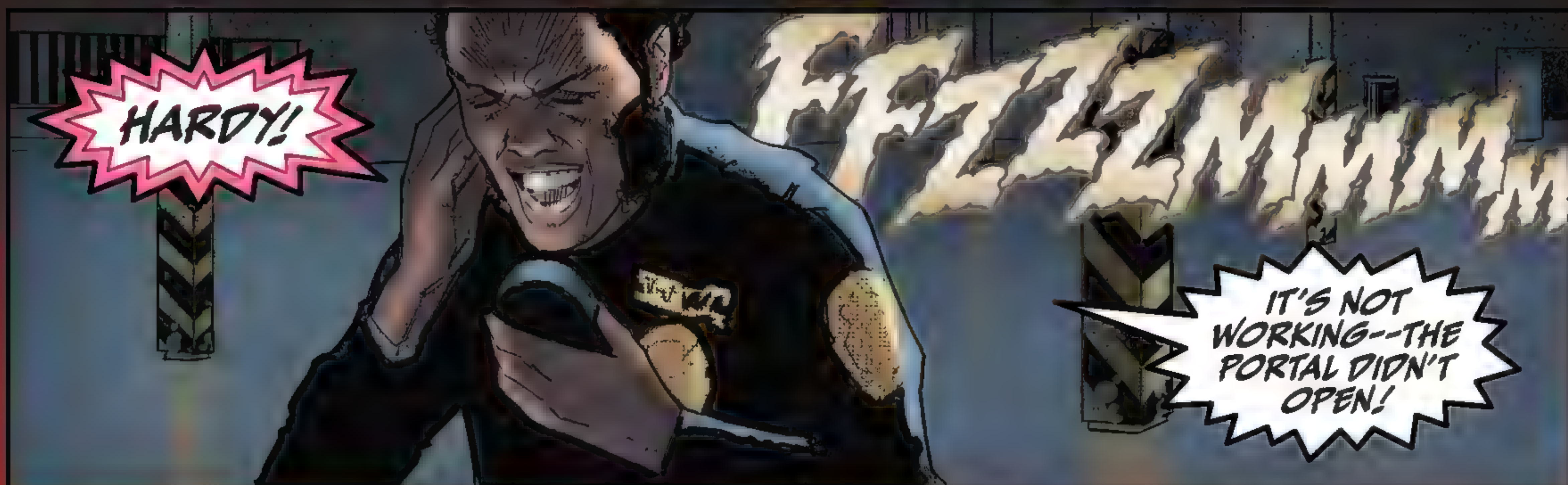
WHO ARE
YOU THAT
YOU WOULD
DISTURB
ME?

WHO ARE
YOU THAT
YOU WOULD
BREAK OPEN
THE DOORS
TO MY
REALM?

FOX,
YOU NEED
TO TALK
TO ME--

WHO ARE
YOU THAT YOU
WOULD CALL
UPON ME SO
RUDELY?

FFZZZZZZZZ





FOX.
YOU TELL ME
WHAT'S GOING
ON *RIGHT*
NOW--

THIS IS THE
PLAN, DARLING.
IT WAS *ALWAYS*
THE PLAN.

I *APOLOGIZE*
FOR LYING TO YOU,
BUT IT COULDN'T BE
HELPED. WE WERE
NEVER GOING TO
STEAL THE GUILD'S
MONEY.

NO.

WE WERE GOING
TO STEAL THEIR
IMMORTALITY.



THERE IS JUST
ONE MORE THING
TO TELL YOU, AND
THEN YOU'LL KNOW
IT *ALL*.

IN ORDER TO MAKE THE
SAINT *BREAK* ITS CONTRACT
WITH ODESSA AND THE GUILD,
I WOULD NEED TO OFFER IT AN
IMMENSE TREASURE. A PRIZE
OF INCALCULABLE WORTH.
DO YOU REMEMBER?



I HAPPEN
TO HAVE SUCH
A THING.

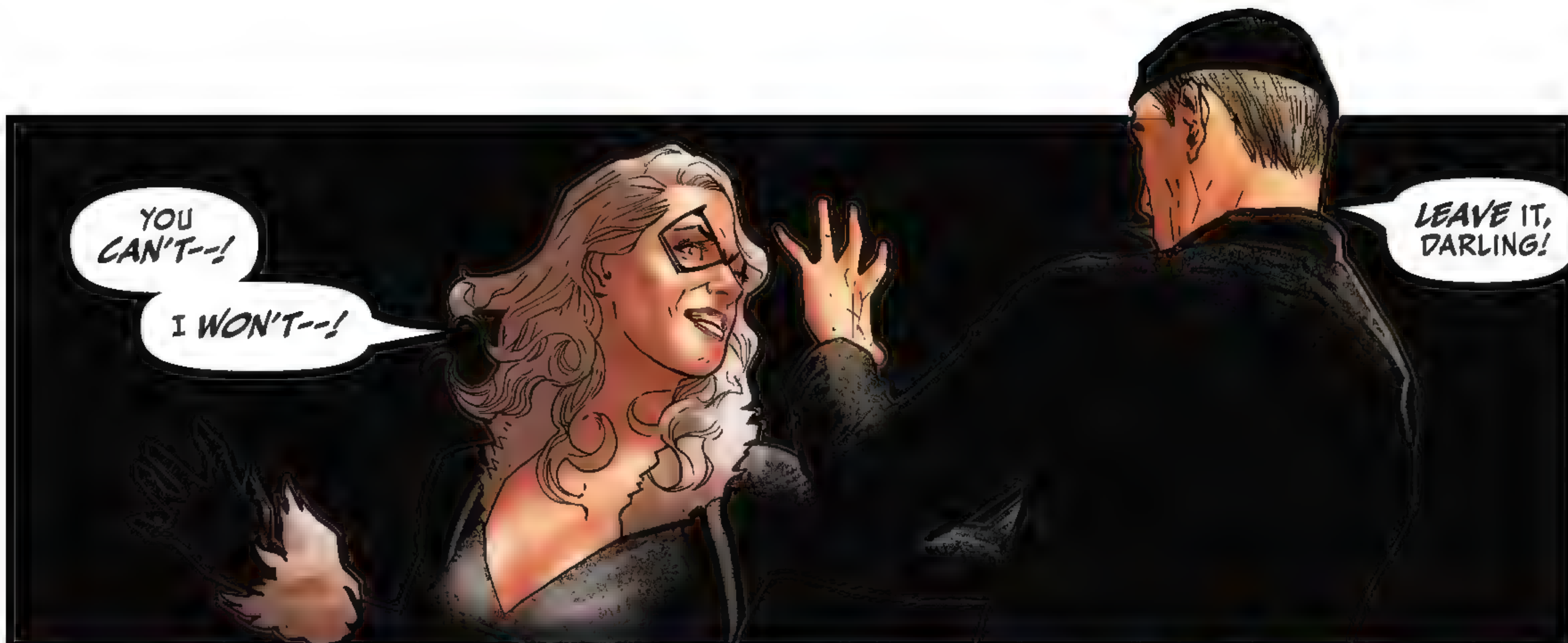
Oh NO,
FOX--

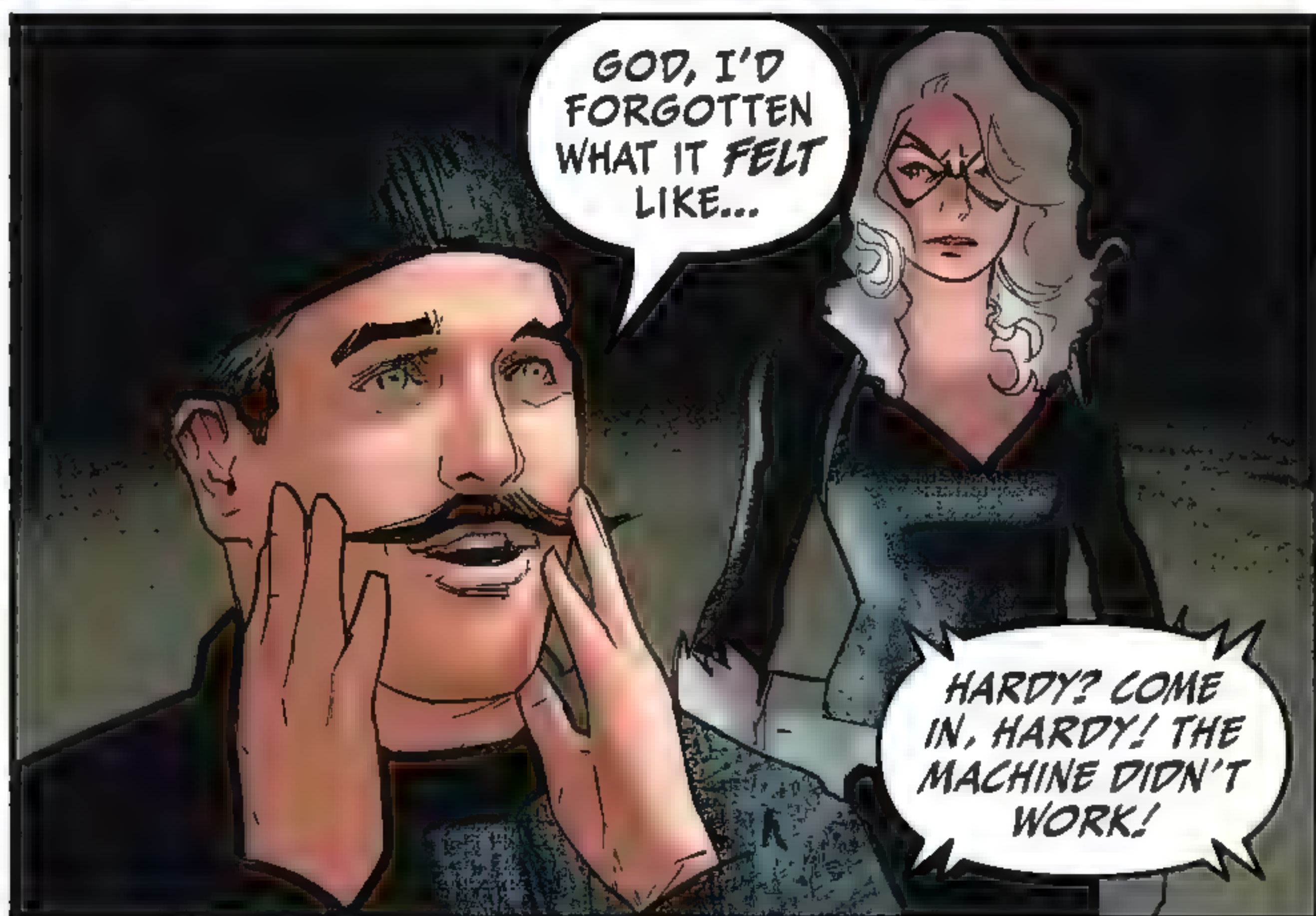














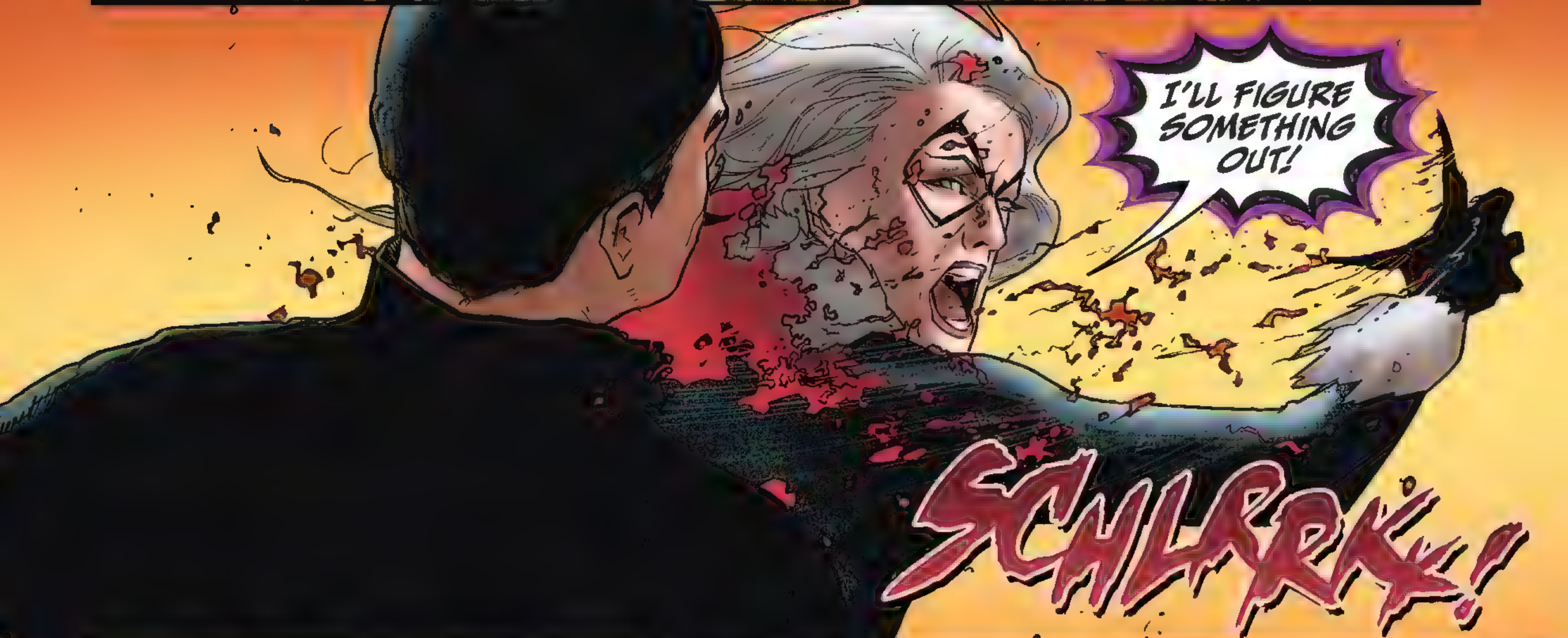
MANHATTAN.
FOR ETERNAL
LIFE.

THEN IF
YOU DIE, THE
DEAL'S OFF,
RIGHT?



I MADE THE
BARGAIN FOR
YOU AS WELL,
DARLING.

WILL
YOU KILL US
BOTH?



I'LL FIGURE
SOMETHING
OUT!

SCHLARK!



HGGKK...

GRAGHKK...

HOW
COULD
YOU?



HOW
COULD YOU
MAKE ME DO
THIS? MAKE ME
MAKE THIS
CHOICE?

=Sniff=

DAMN
YOU, FOX!

DAMN
YOU!
I LOVED
YOU!

HGGKK...
GRAGHHK...
GAAGGKH...
HGKK...



GRAGGHKK...

Ha!

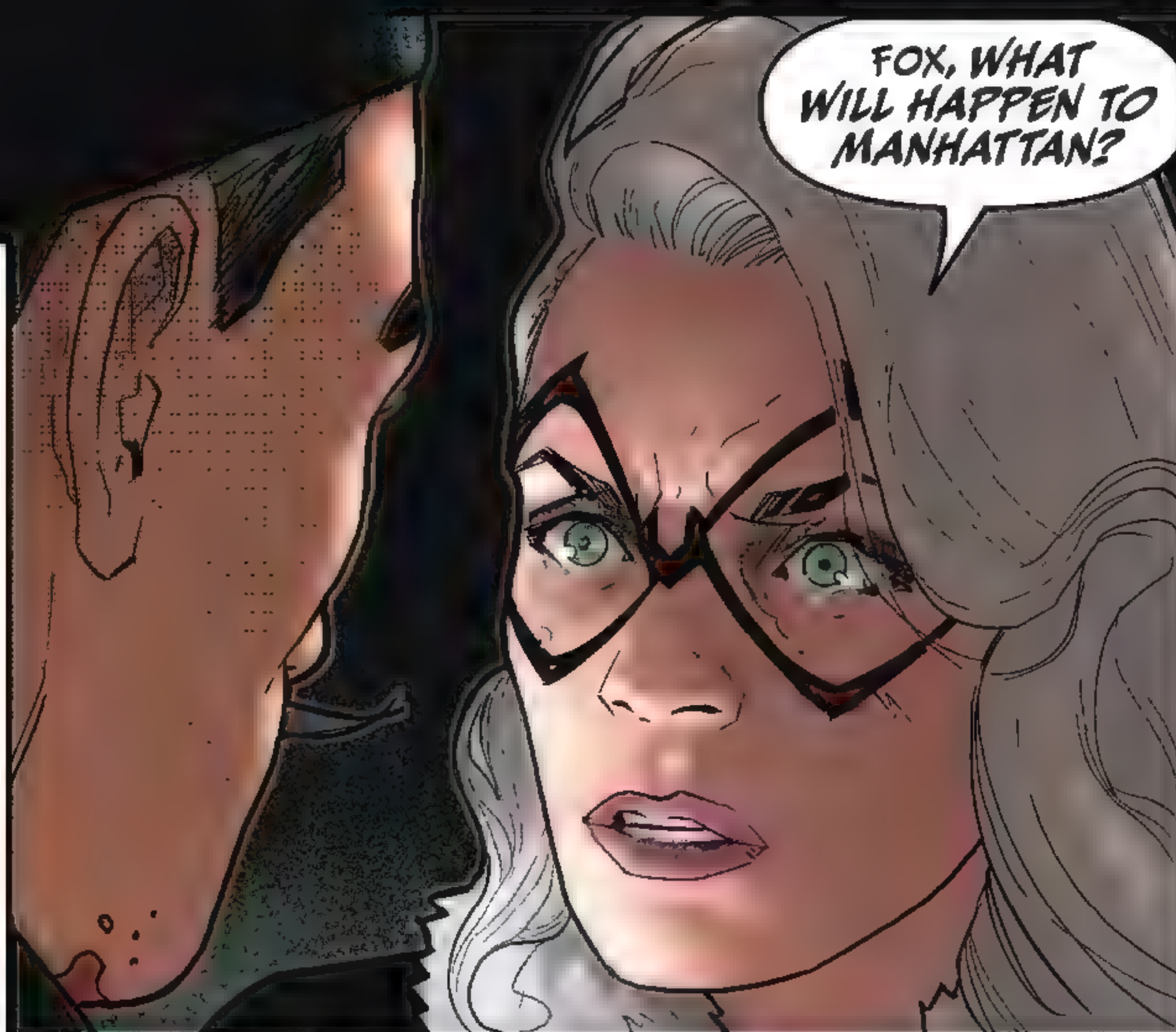
HAHAHAHA!

HAHAHA!



I'M
HEALED--!

FELICIA,
WITH THE SAINT'S
POWER CHanneled
into JUST US TWO...
WE CANNOT DIE!

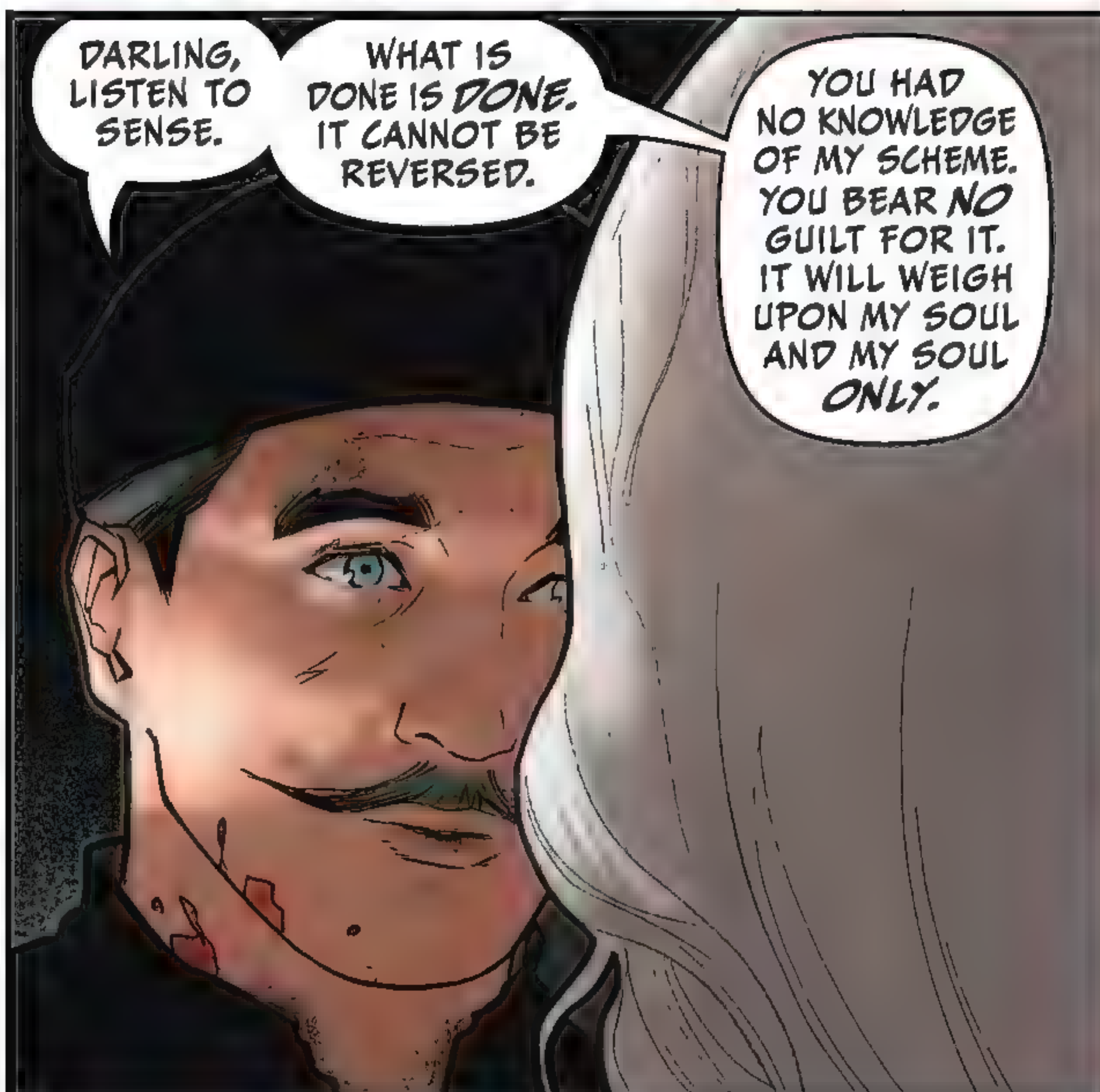


FOX, WHAT
WILL HAPPEN TO
MANHATTAN?



IT WILL BE
TAKEN INTO THE
VAULTS.

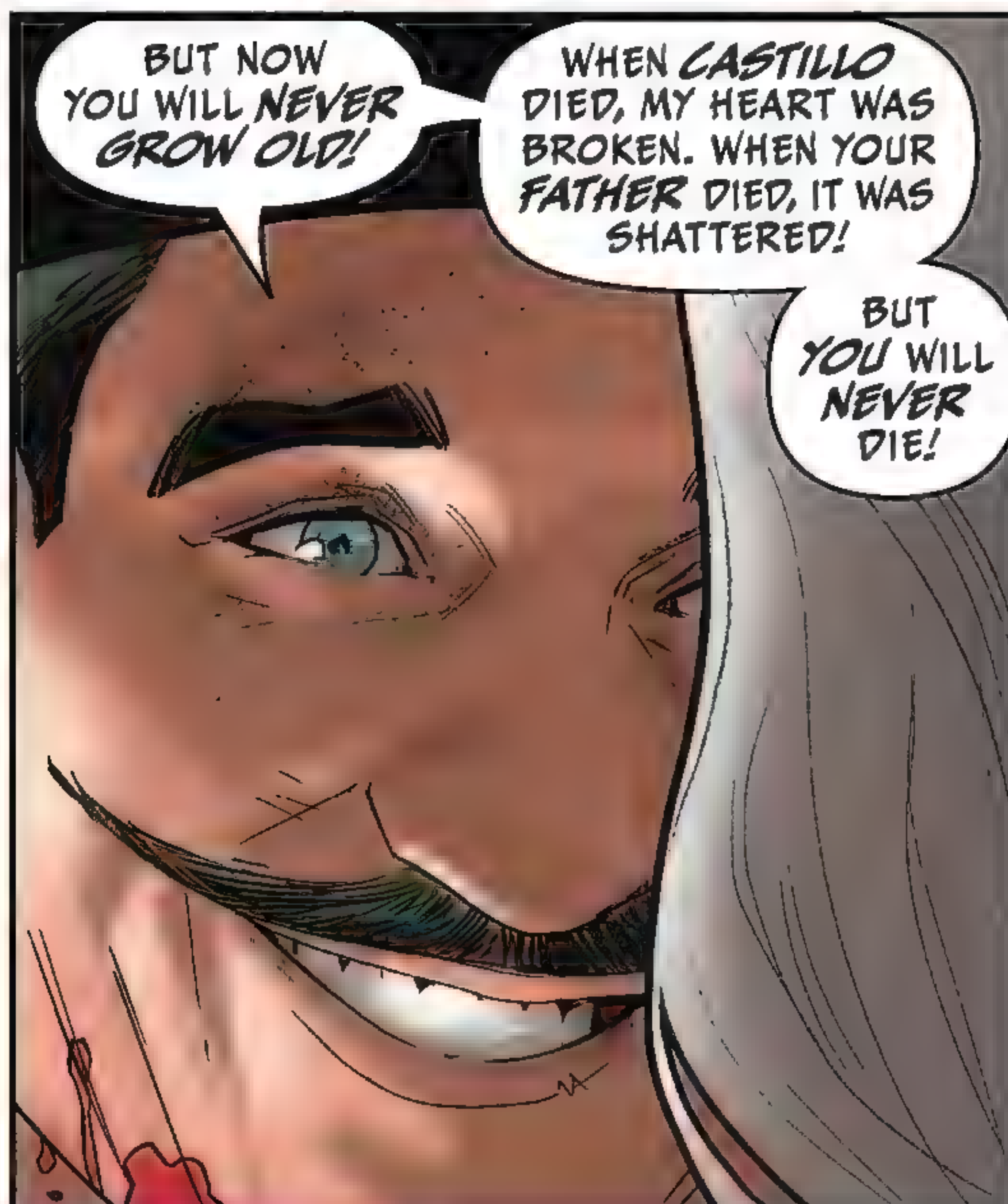
I SUGGEST THAT
WE GET AWAY
BEFORE THAT
HAPPENS.



DARLING,
LISTEN TO
SENSE.

WHAT IS
DONE IS *DONE*.
IT CANNOT BE
REVERSED.

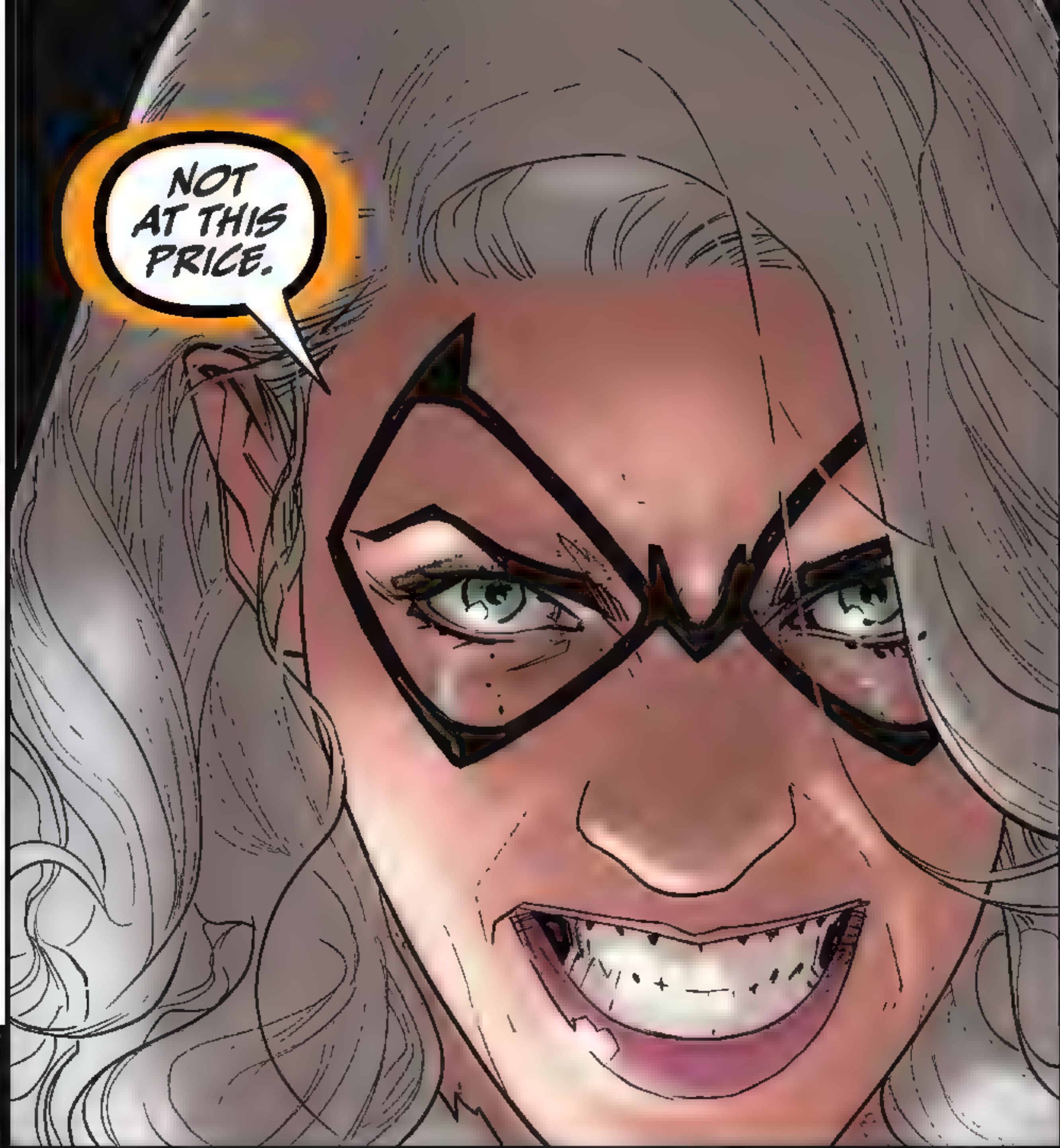
YOU HAD
NO KNOWLEDGE
OF MY SCHEME.
YOU BEAR NO
GUILT FOR IT.
IT WILL WEIGH
UPON MY SOUL
AND MY SOUL
ONLY.



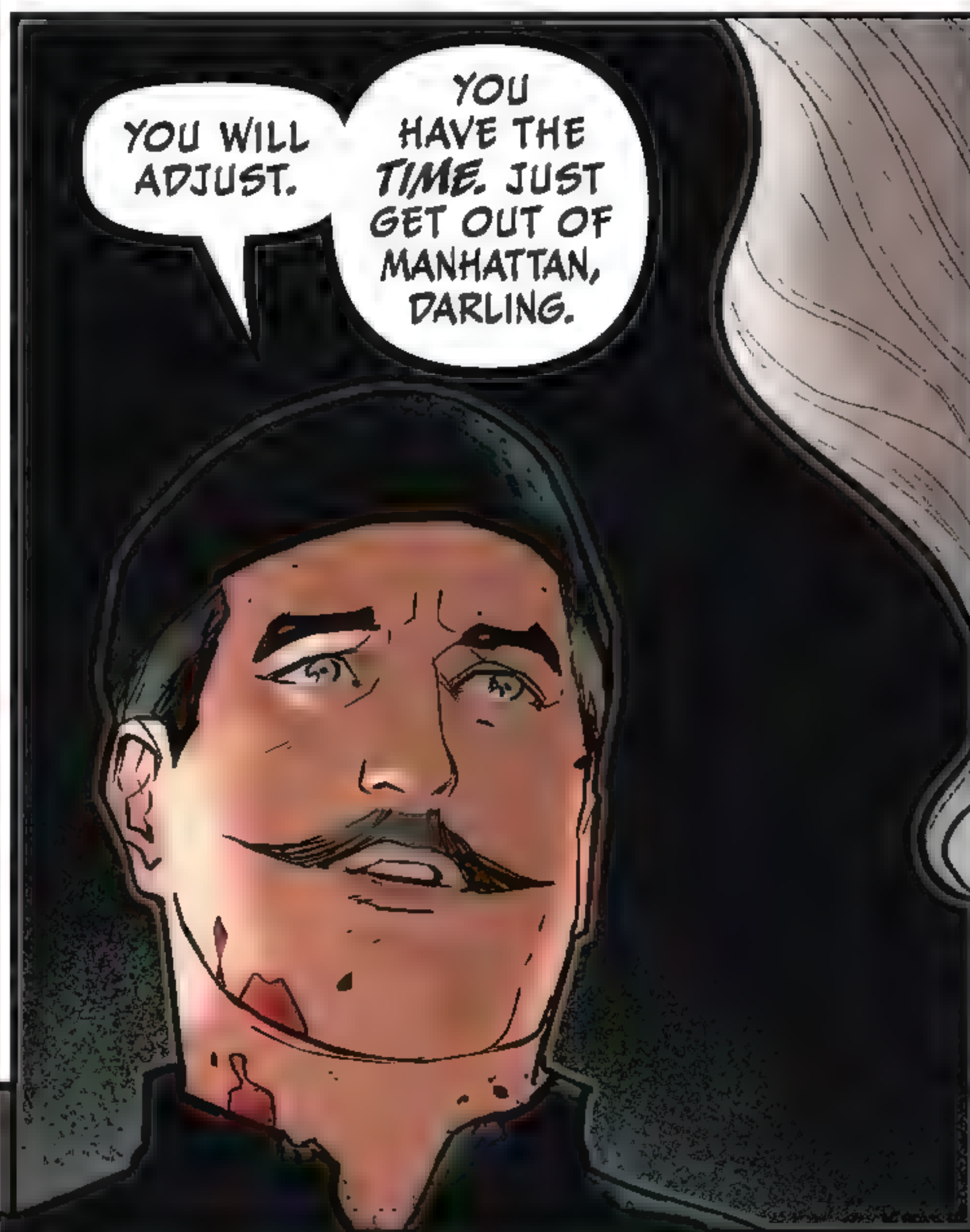
BUT NOW
YOU WILL NEVER
GROW OLD!

WHEN *CASTILLO*
DIED, MY HEART WAS
BROKEN. WHEN YOUR
FATHER DIED, IT WAS
SHATTERED!

BUT
YOU WILL
NEVER
DIE!



NOT
AT THIS
PRICE.



YOU WILL
ADJUST.

YOU
HAVE THE
TIME. JUST
GET OUT OF
MANHATTAN,
DARLING.



I WILL
FIND YOU
LATER, WHEN
IT IS ALL
OVER.

YOU'LL SEE
THAT THERE IS NO
PROFIT IN *GUILT*. YOU
NOW HAVE ALL THE
TIME IN THE WORLD
TO GET OVER IT.

AAH!



YOU'LL SEE,
DARLING.



AND WITH THAT,
HE'S GONE.

I FORGOT HOW
GOOD HE WAS AT THE
SMOKE-BOMB TRICK.

WHAT...

WHAT AM I
GOING TO DO
NOW?



HARDY!
HARDY,
ARE YOU
READING
ME?

PEOPLE'RE
SCREAMING
OUTSIDE,
DOC.

SOMETHING'S
HAPPENING.

HARDY!
COME IN,
HARDY!



BOSS!



YOU OKAY,
BOSS?

THE
MACHINE,
IT DIDN'T
WORK--

IT
WORKED,
BRUNO.

IT WORKED
JUST LIKE
THE FOX
PLANNED.

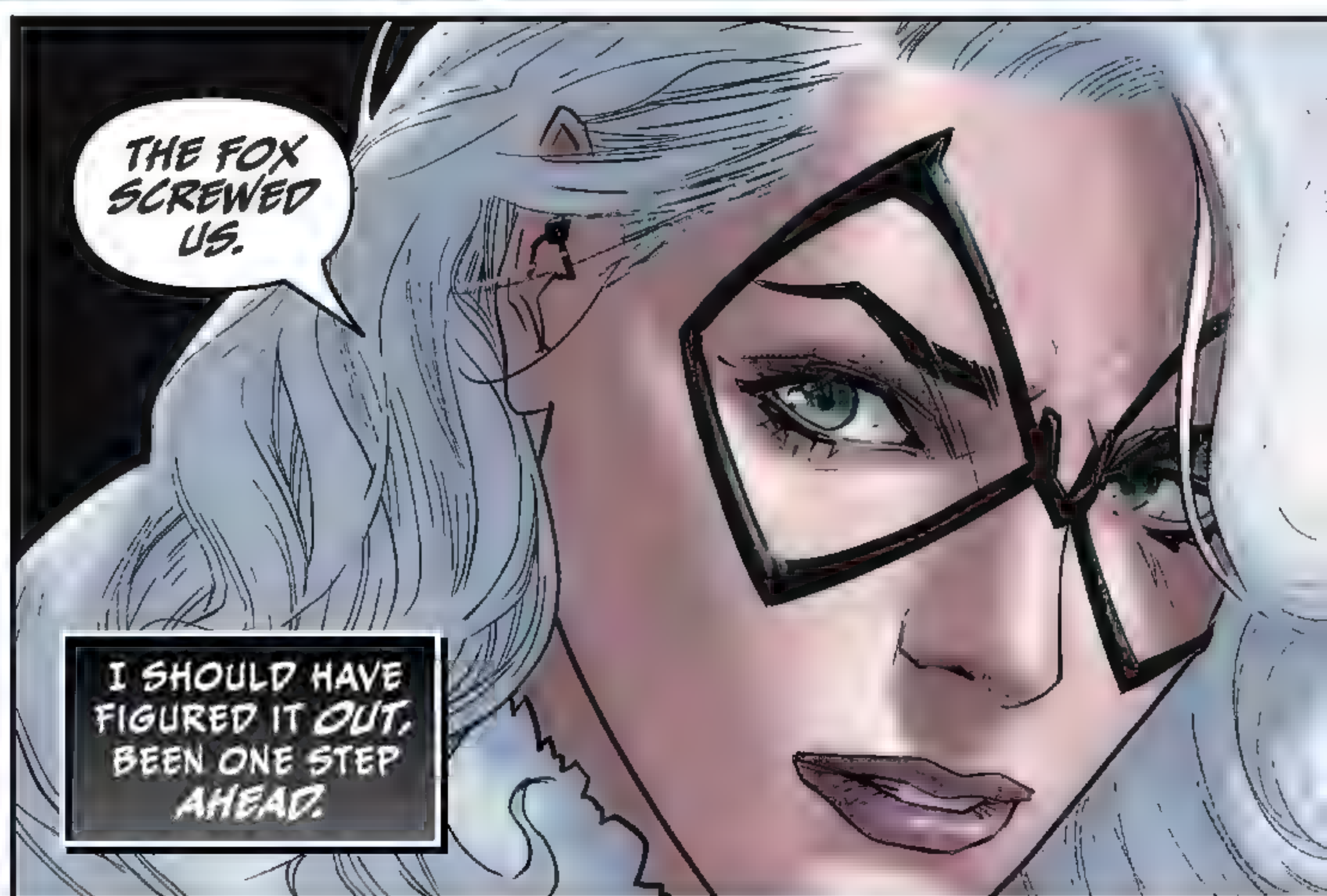
I SHOULD
HAVE KNOWN.



WHAT
ARE YOU
BABBLING
ABOUT?

THERE WAS
NO PORTAL,
NO VAULTS,
NO MONEY!

I SHOULD
HAVE
SNIFFED
OUT HIS
MOTIVES.



THE FOX
SCREWED
US.

I SHOULD HAVE
FIGURED IT OUT,
BEEN ONE STEP
AHEAD.

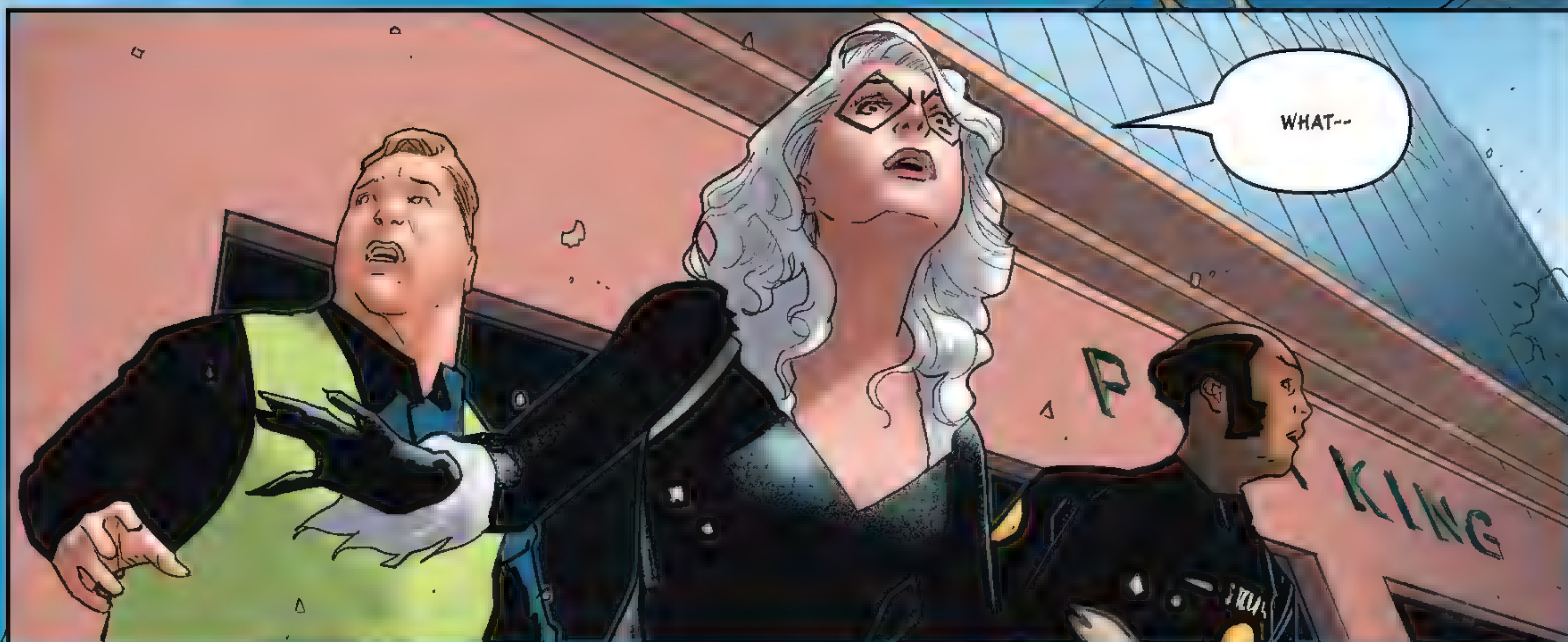


BUT I
DIDN'T.

I'VE GOT
TO MAKE IT
RIGHT.

BECAUSE
WHEN I NEEDED
A FATHER, HE
WAS THERE.

BECAUSE
I LOVE HIM.





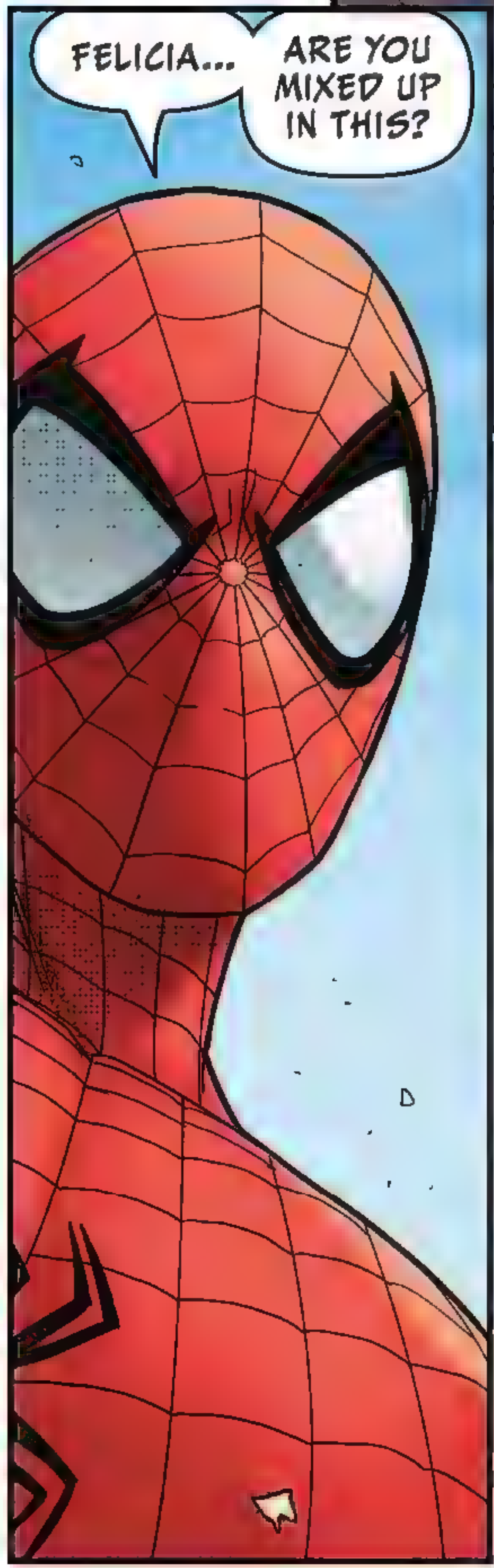
THINGS'VE
GONE *SIDWAYS*,
BOYS--

FELICIA!

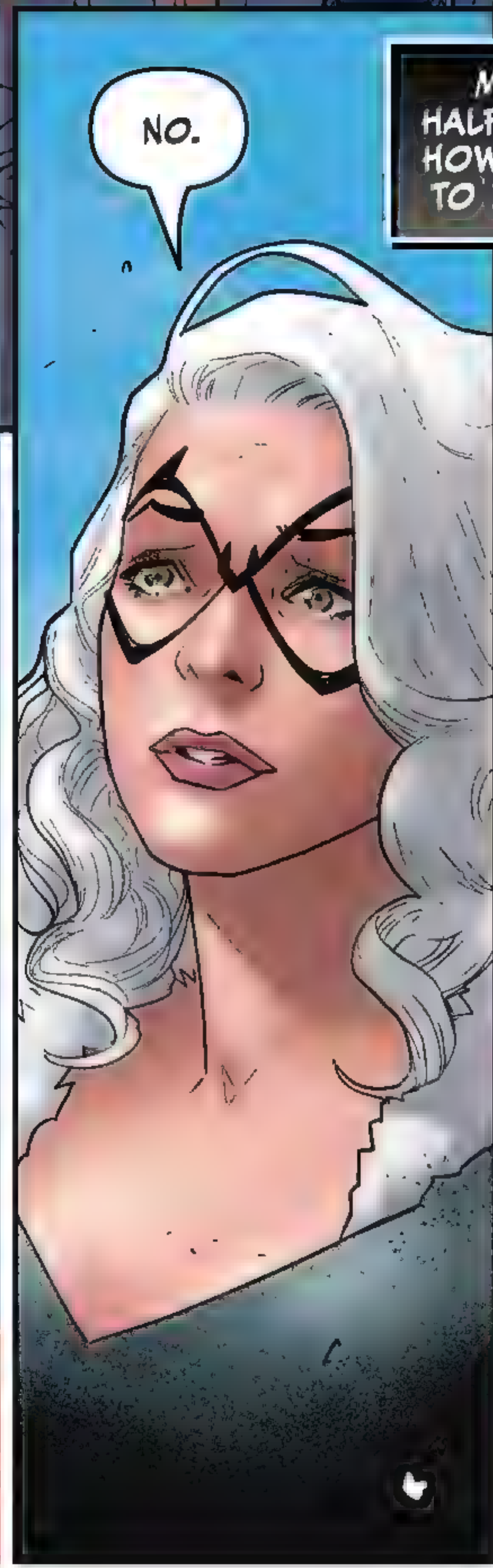


WHAT'S
GOING ON?
WHAT ARE THESE...
GOLD VINES?

I-I...
DON'T
KNOW.



FELICIA... ARE YOU
MIXED UP
IN THIS?



NO.

MY HEART
HALF-BREAKS AT
HOW EASY IT IS
TO LIE TO HIM.



OKAY...

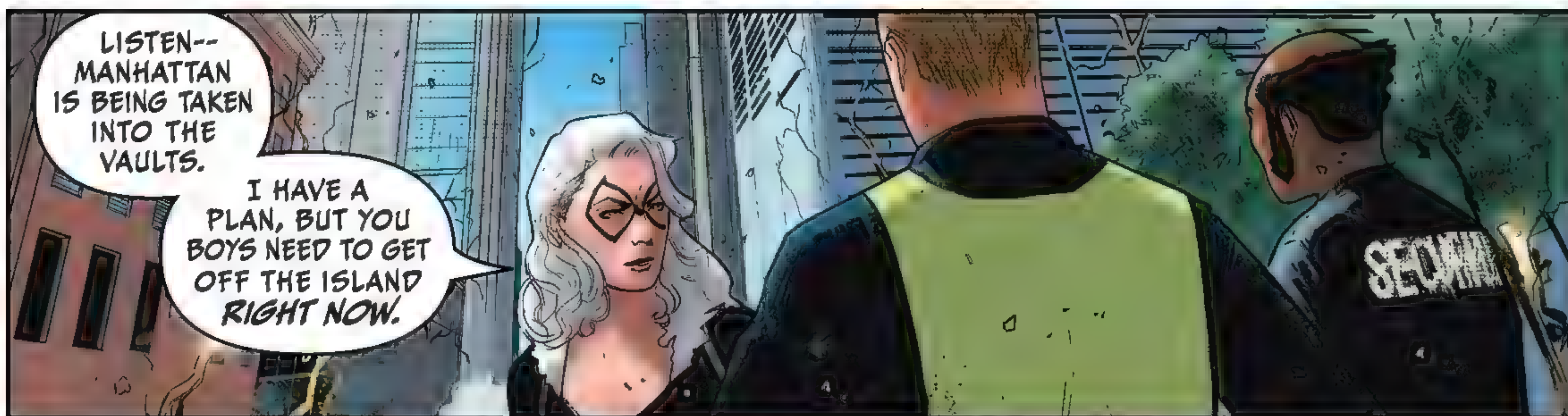
Whew.



I NEED TO
FIGURE OUT
WHAT'S GOING
ON. YOU THINK
REED RICHARDS
IS BUSY?

WHO AM
I KIDDING,
HE'S ALWAYS
BUSY.

IT BREAKS
ALL THE WAY
WHEN HE
BELIEVES ME
WITHOUT
QUESTION.





MAYBE
I CAN'T
DIE...

...BUT THAT HURT.

STILL,
WHERE
I'M GOING,
THEY CAN'T
FOLLOW.

BECAUSE
THIS IS ALL
MY FAULT.

AND MY BOYS
SHOULDN'T BE MADE
TO PAY FOR IT.

THE FOX KNEW A
LOT ABOUT THE
GILDED SAINT.

FIGURED OUT
HOW TO KNOCK
ON ITS DOOR
SO IT WOULD
ANSWER.

FIGURED OUT
HOW TO MAKE IT
BREAK ITS BARGAIN
WITH THE GUILD.

TO ME? IT'S JUST
A SPOOKY SKELETON
WITH LIBERACE'S
FASHION SENSE.

SO IF I WANT TO
DO SOMETHING
ABOUT THIS MESS?

I NEED SOMEONE WHO
KNOWS AS MUCH ABOUT
THE GILDED SAINT
AS THE FOX DOES.

MAN, THIS IS
REALLY GOING
TO SUCK.

YOU HAVE A
LOT OF NERVE
COMING HERE.

GIVEN
THE NUMBER OF
YOU GUYS I'VE PUT
IN THE HOSPITAL OVER
THE LAST FEW MONTHS...
GETTING SO FRESH
WITH ME HERE?

I THINK
YOU'RE THE
ONES WITH THE
NERVE. WELL
DONE.

TAP!

LAUGH WHILE
YOU CAN, HARDY.
YOU'RE SCARED.
I CAN SMELL IT
ON YOU.

YEAH,
WELL...

WHUD!

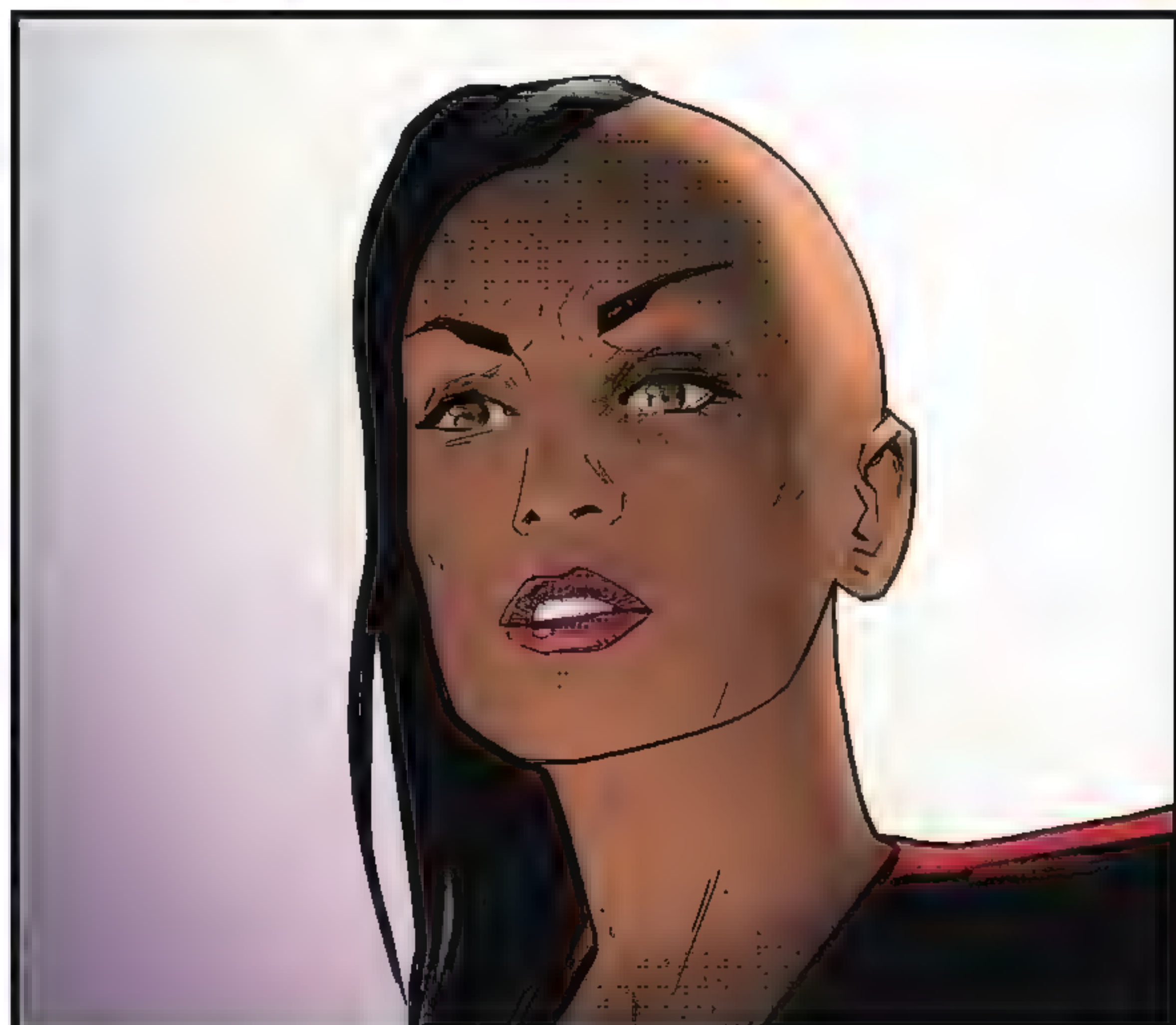
UGHKK!

UmmNNHHhh...

...WHAT DO
YOU SMELL NOW,
BABY?

IS IT
PENNIES?
I BET IT'S
PENNIES.

OKAY, CHILL.
LET'S GET THIS
BEATDOWN OVER
WITH.





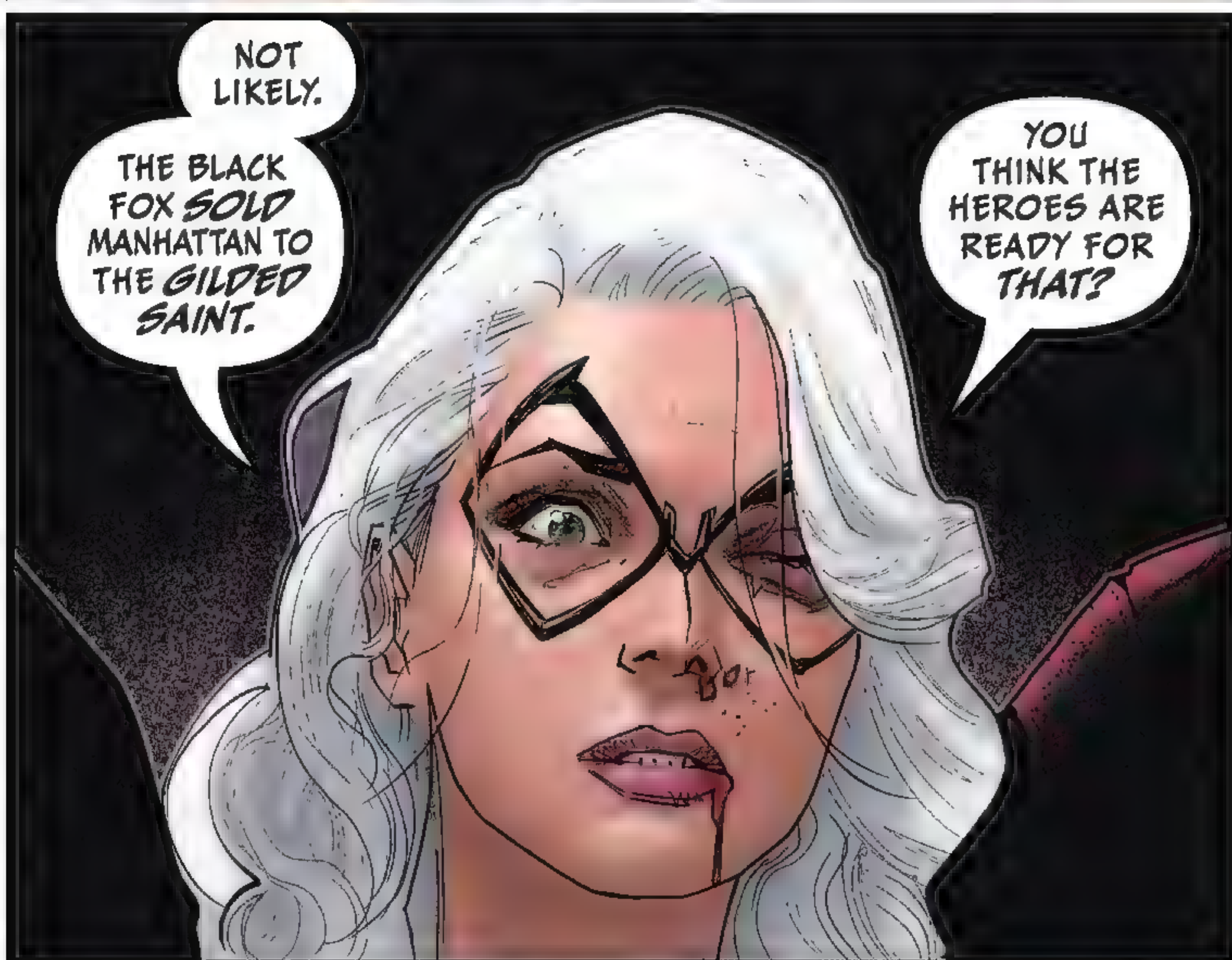
THE
CITY
NEEDS
YOU.

HAVE YOU
SEEN WHAT'S
GOING ON OUT
THERE?



WHAT OF IT?
ANOTHER DAY IN NEW
YORK, ANOTHER CRISIS.
IT IS **NO CONCERN**
OF MINE.

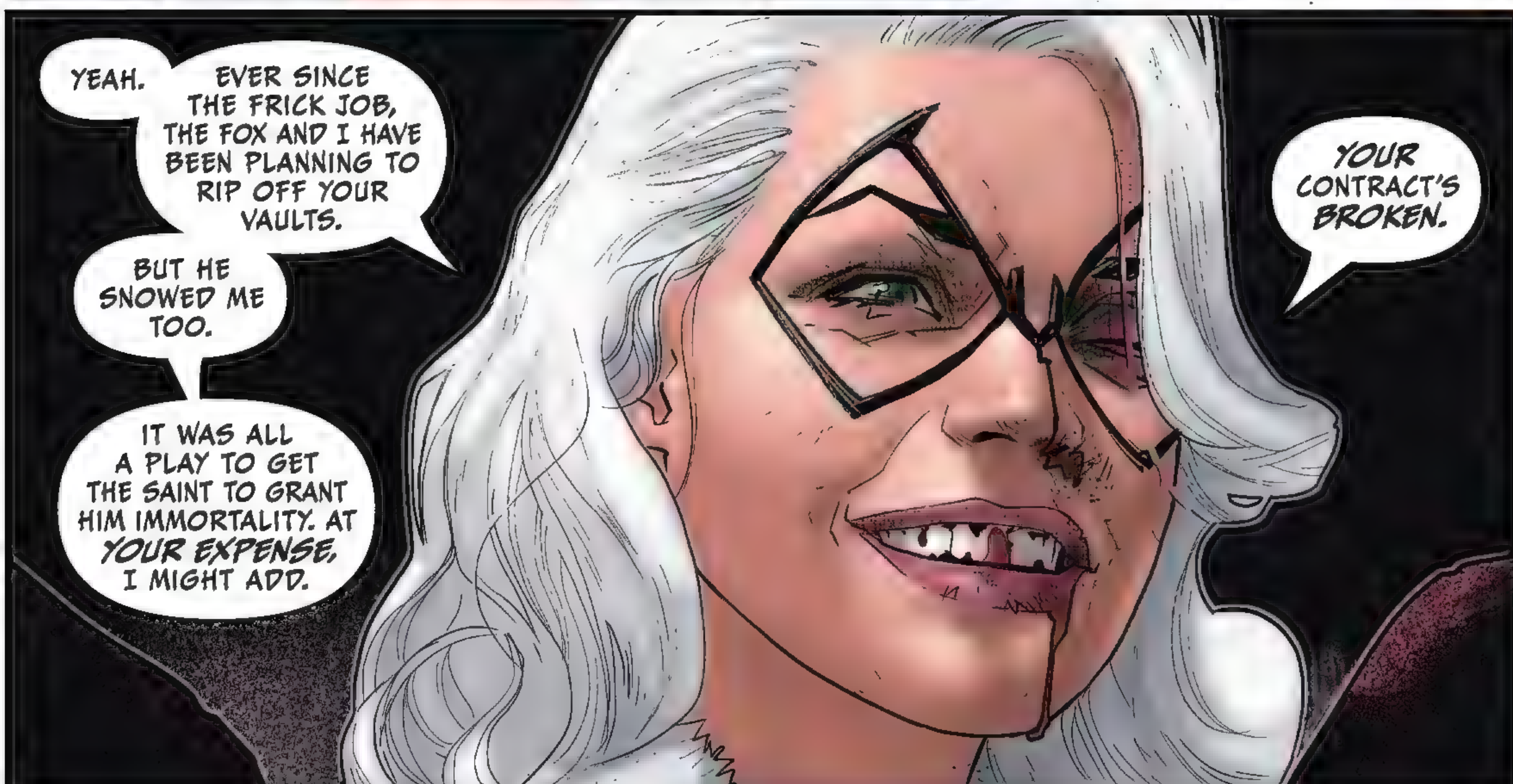
THE **HEROES**
WILL SOLVE IT,
ONE WAY OR
ANOTHER.



NOT
LIKELY.

THE BLACK
FOX **SOLD**
MANHATTAN TO
THE **GILDED**
SAINT.

YOU
THINK THE
HEROES ARE
READY FOR
THAT?



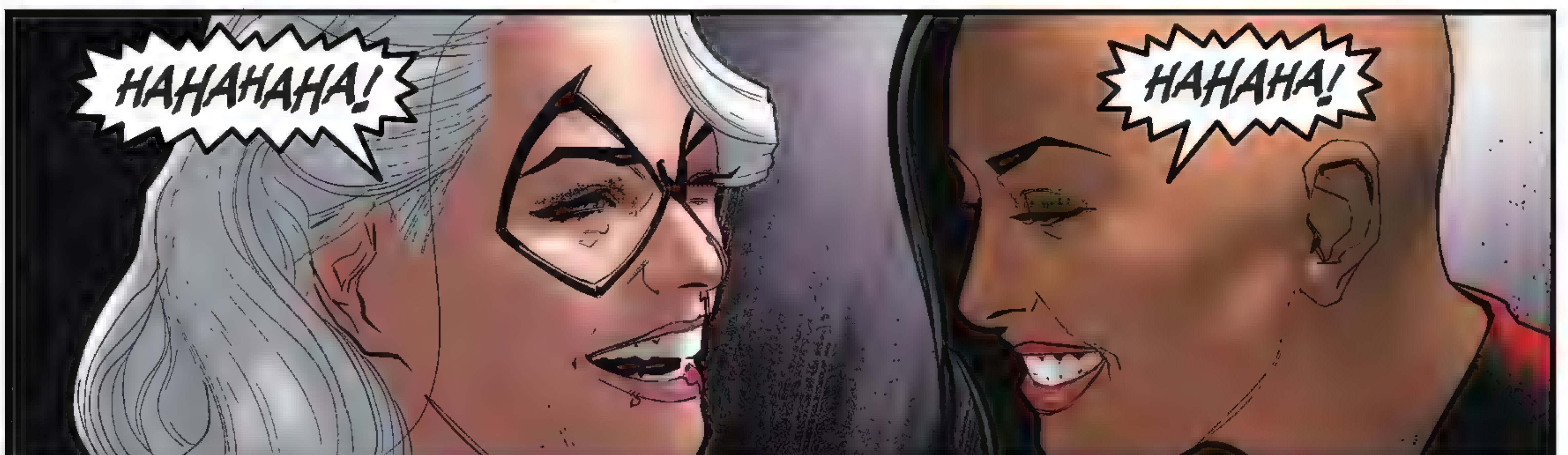
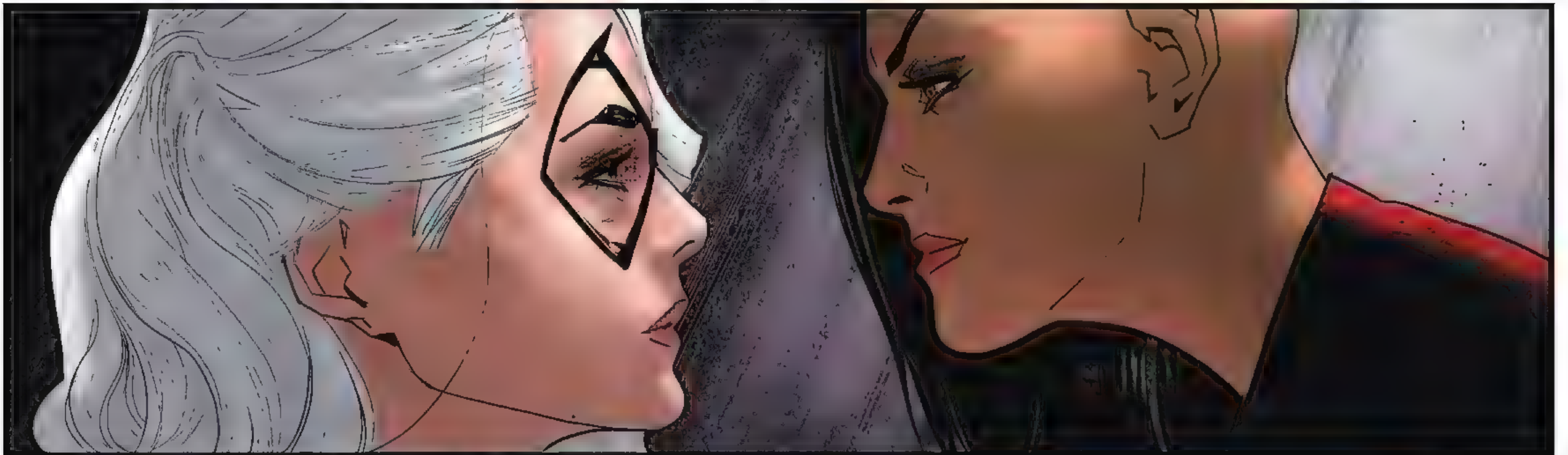
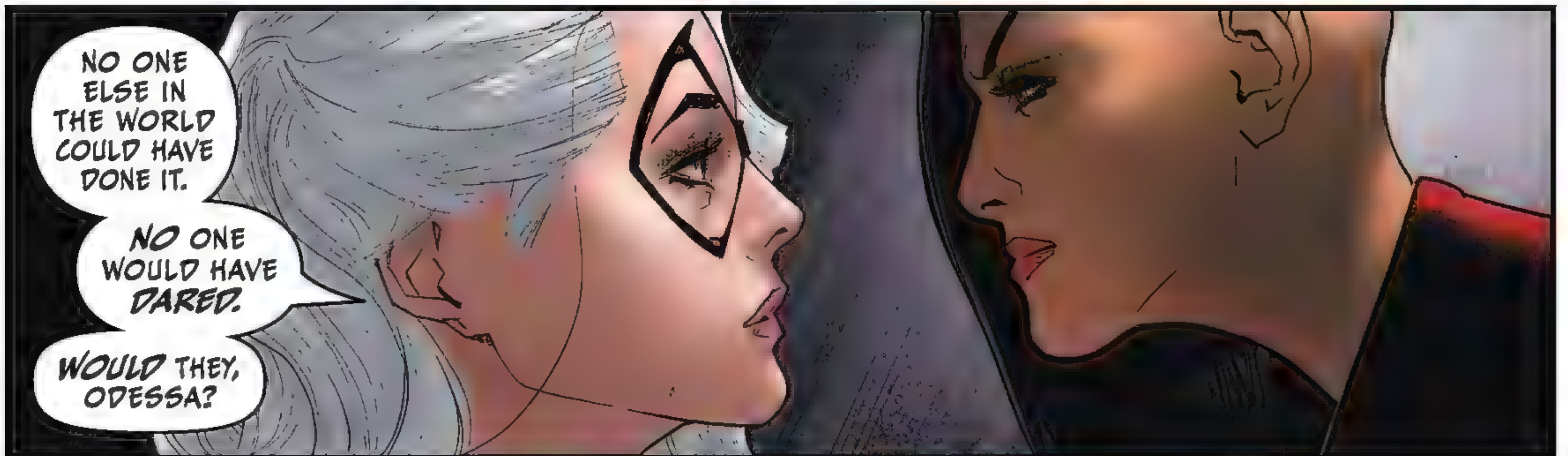
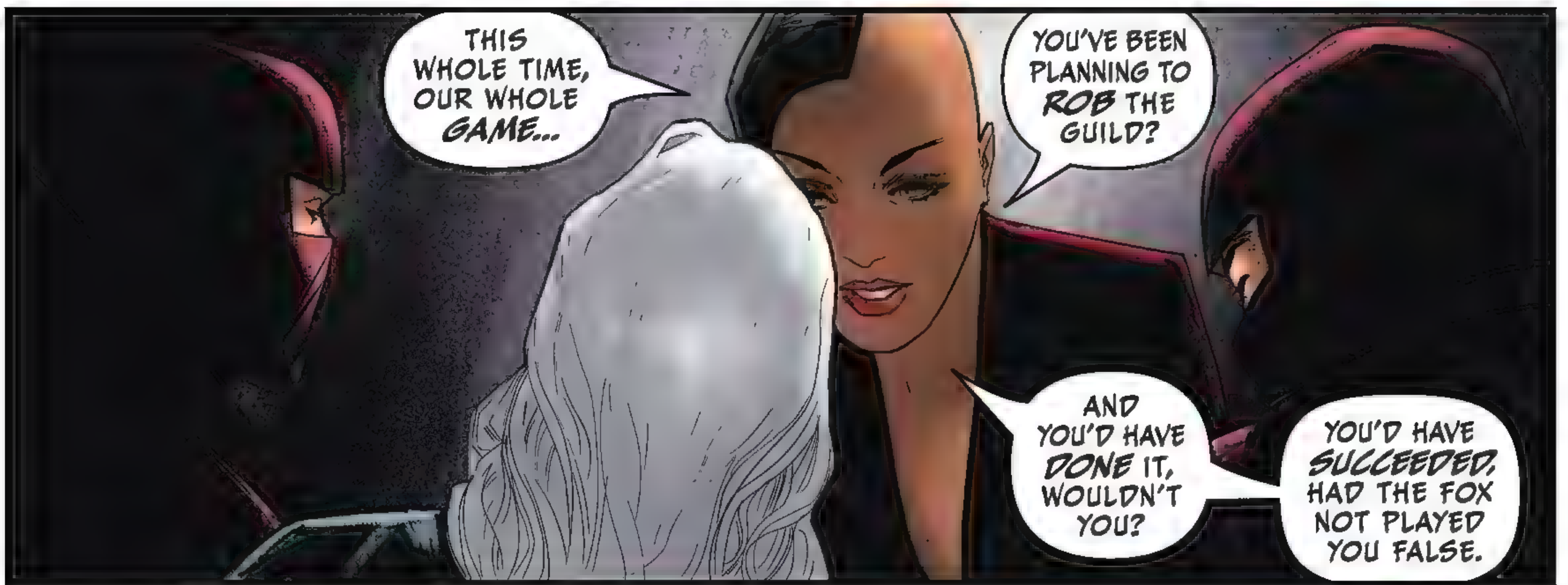
YEAH.

EVER SINCE
THE FRICK JOB,
THE FOX AND I HAVE
BEEN PLANNING TO
RIP OFF YOUR
VAULTS.

BUT HE
SNOWED ME
TOO.

IT WAS ALL
A PLAY TO GET
THE SAINT TO GRANT
HIM IMMORTALITY. AT
YOUR EXPENSE,
I MIGHT ADD.

**YOUR
CONTRACT'S
BROKEN.**





Haha...
Oh MY.

RELEASE
HER.



WE HAVE
A PROBLEM THAT
NEEDS TO BE SOLVED,
THEN. WHAT DO YOU
PROPOSE?

WHAT?

I DON'T KNOW
ANYTHING ABOUT
ALL THIS MAGIC
STUFF!

WHY DO
YOU THINK
I CAME HERE
AND TOOK
MY LICKS?!

MS.
DRAKE!



WE FOUND
HARDY'S
COLLABORATORS
SKULKING
OUTSIDE!

WHAT?!

I TOLD
YOU TWO TO
SPLIT!

HOW DID
YOU FIND
ME?!

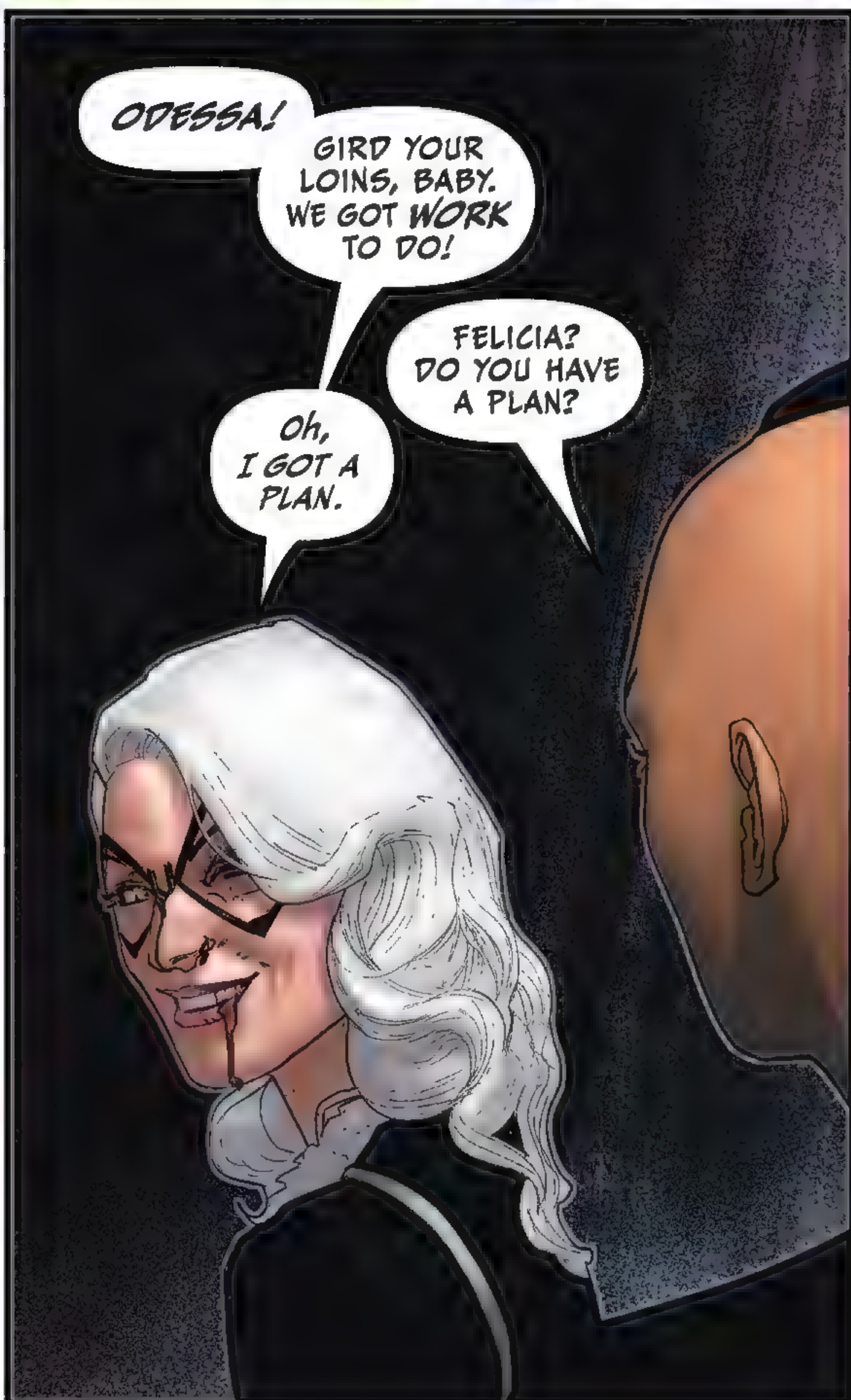
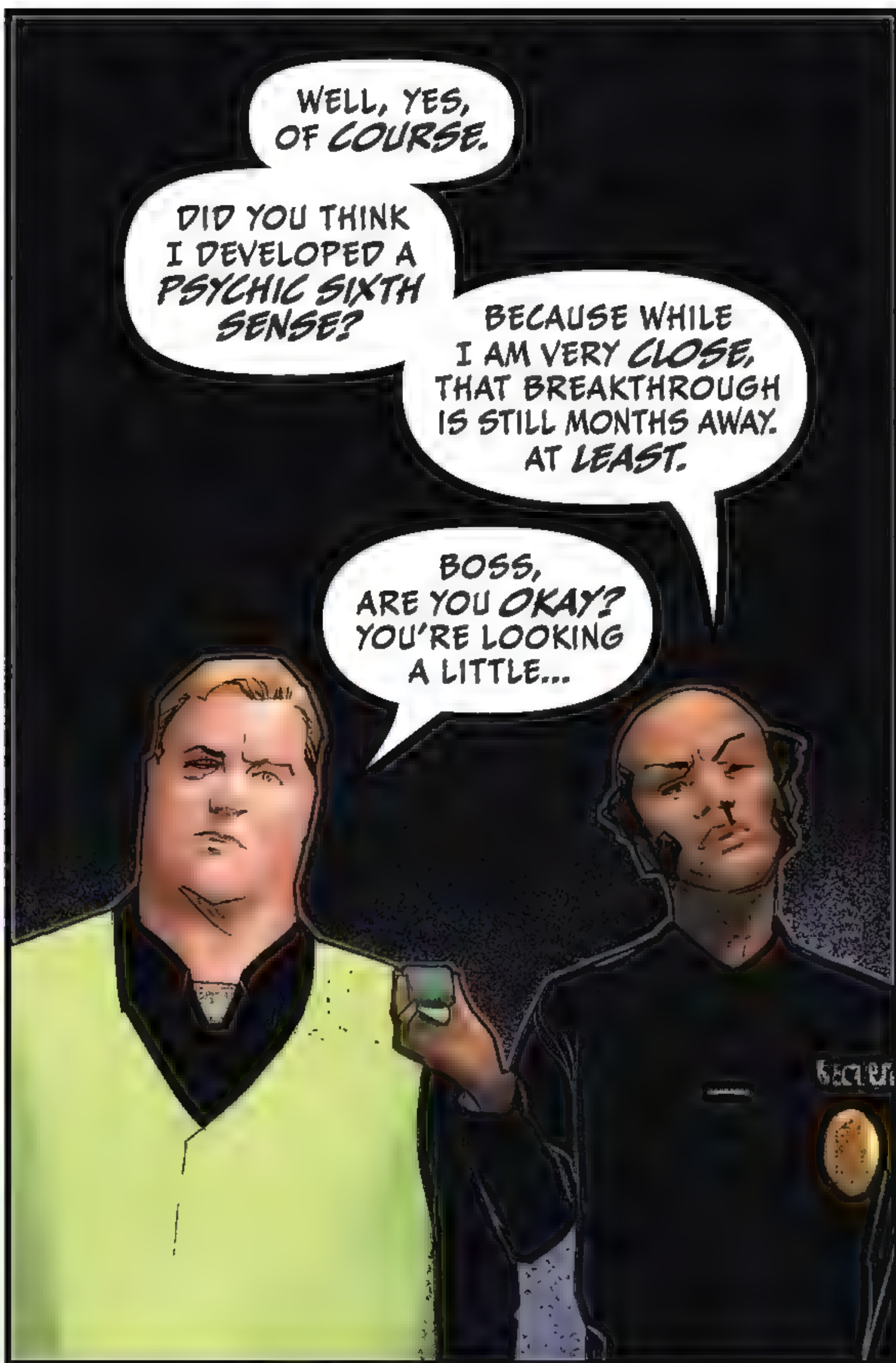


BOSS,
I SEEN
WHITE
FANG.

YOU AIN'T
FOOLING NO
ONE. YOU EVEN
SAID, "GO ON,
GET OUT OF
HERE."

AND I CHIPPED
YOUR COSTUME,
JUST LIKE I CHIPPED
THE DEED AND THE
PAINTINGS!

HA! TAKE
THAT!



VERY SHORTLY.

ARE
YOUR BOYS
READY?

MY
THIEF-SORCERERS
HAVE TRAINED FOR
YEARS, LEARNING
**BLASPHEMOUS
SECRETS**
AND **UNCANNY
INCANTATIONS.**

BUT BY
ALL MEANS,
ADDRESS
THEM AS MY
"BOYS."

ARE
YOU CERTAIN
THAT THIS IS
WISE?

WHAT?
**NO, OF
COURSE
NOT.**

BUT THAT'S
NEVER BEEN
MY CONCERN,
HAS IT?

YOU KNOW
MY **PRICE, FELICIA.**
SOMEONE HAS TO
PAY FOR THIS.

I WANT THE
BLACK FOX OFF
THE BOARD. DO WE
UNDERSTAND ONE
ANOTHER?

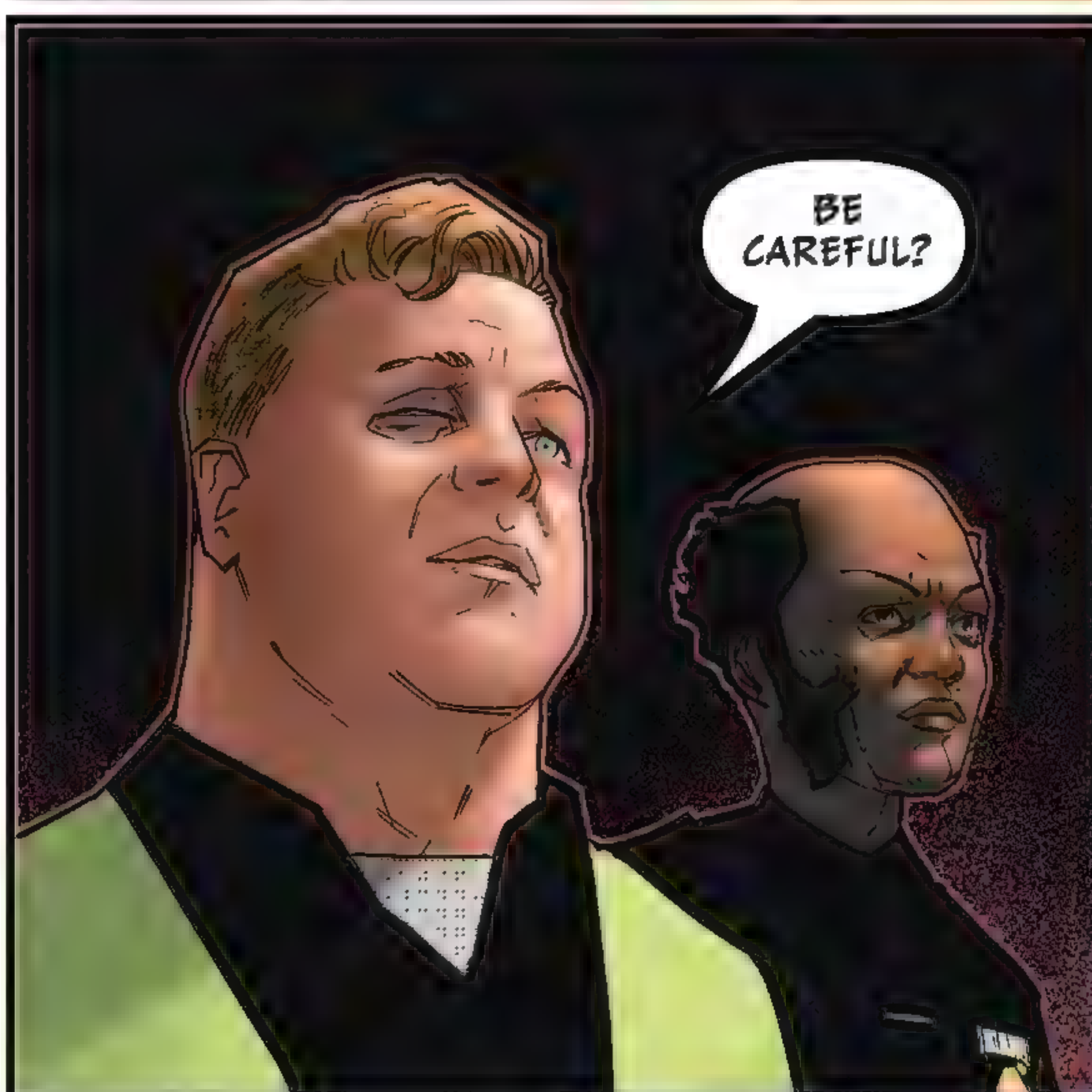
**I'LL DEAL WITH
THE FOX. HE'S MY
RESPONSIBILITY.**

EVERYTHING ELSE,
YOU AND ME,
WE'LL SORT IT OUT
IF I **SURVIVE
THIS.**

BUT
WHATEVER
HAPPENS,
YOU LEAVE
MY BOYS
ALONE.

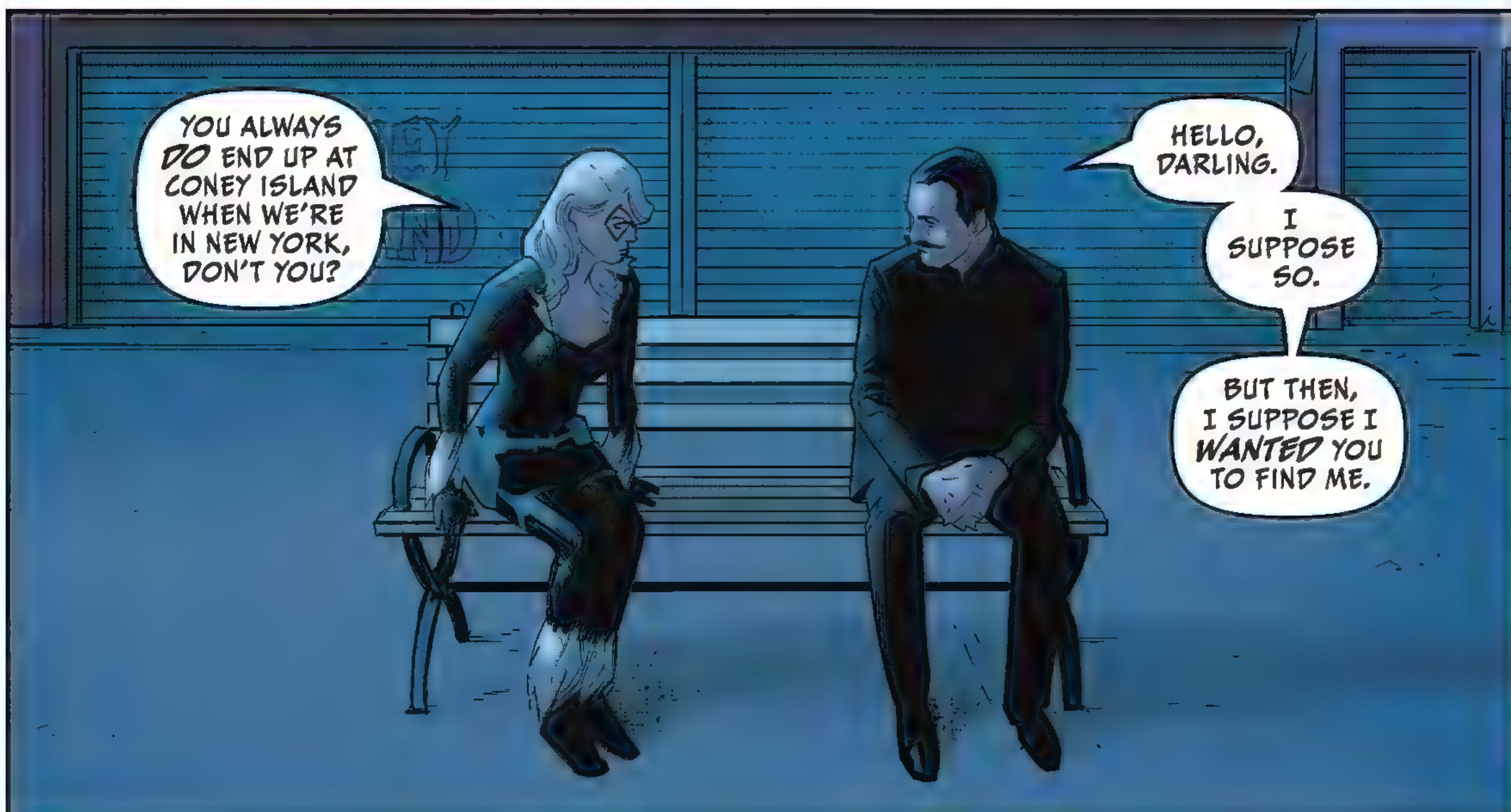
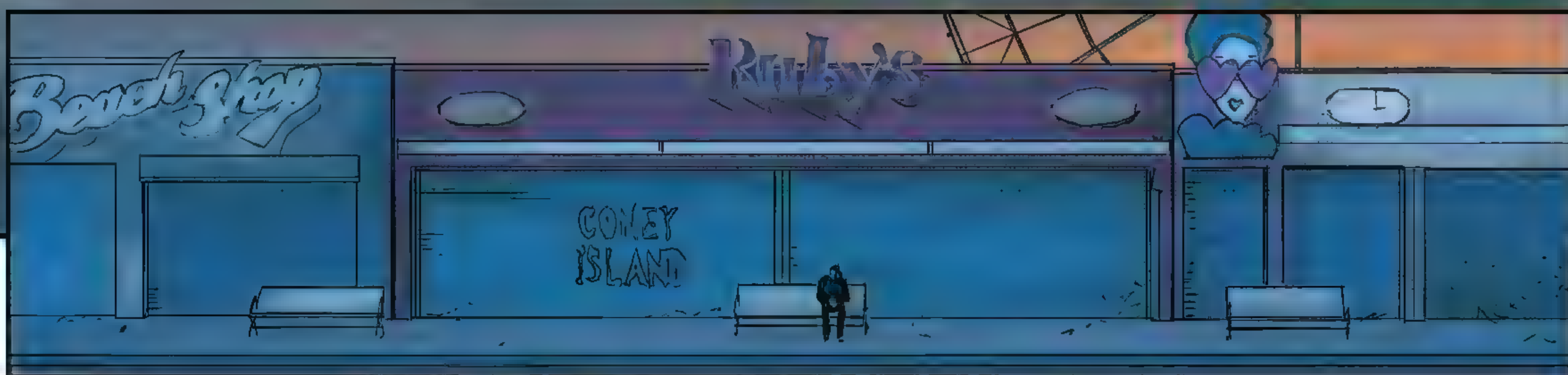
A FAIR
BARGAIN.

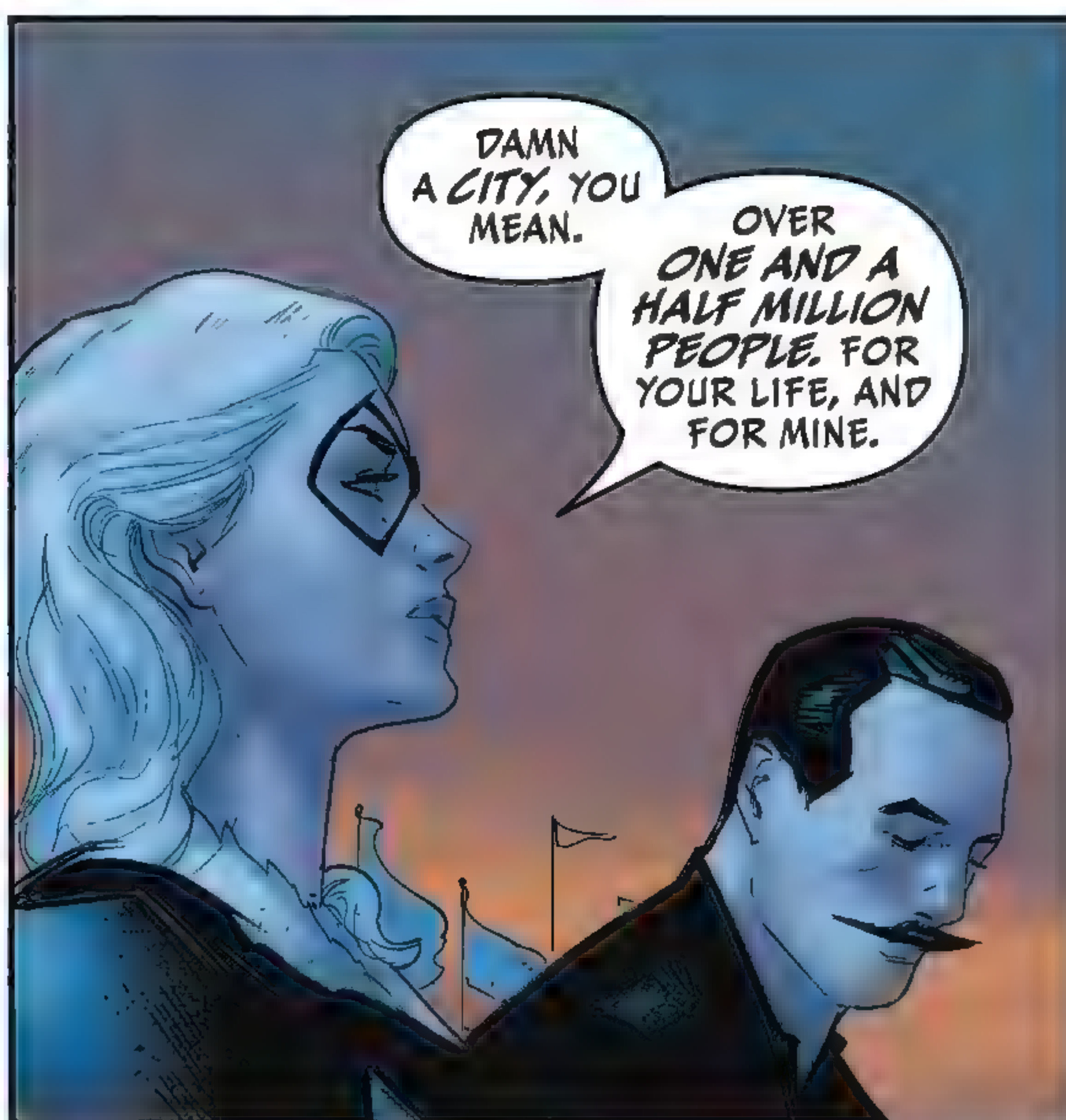
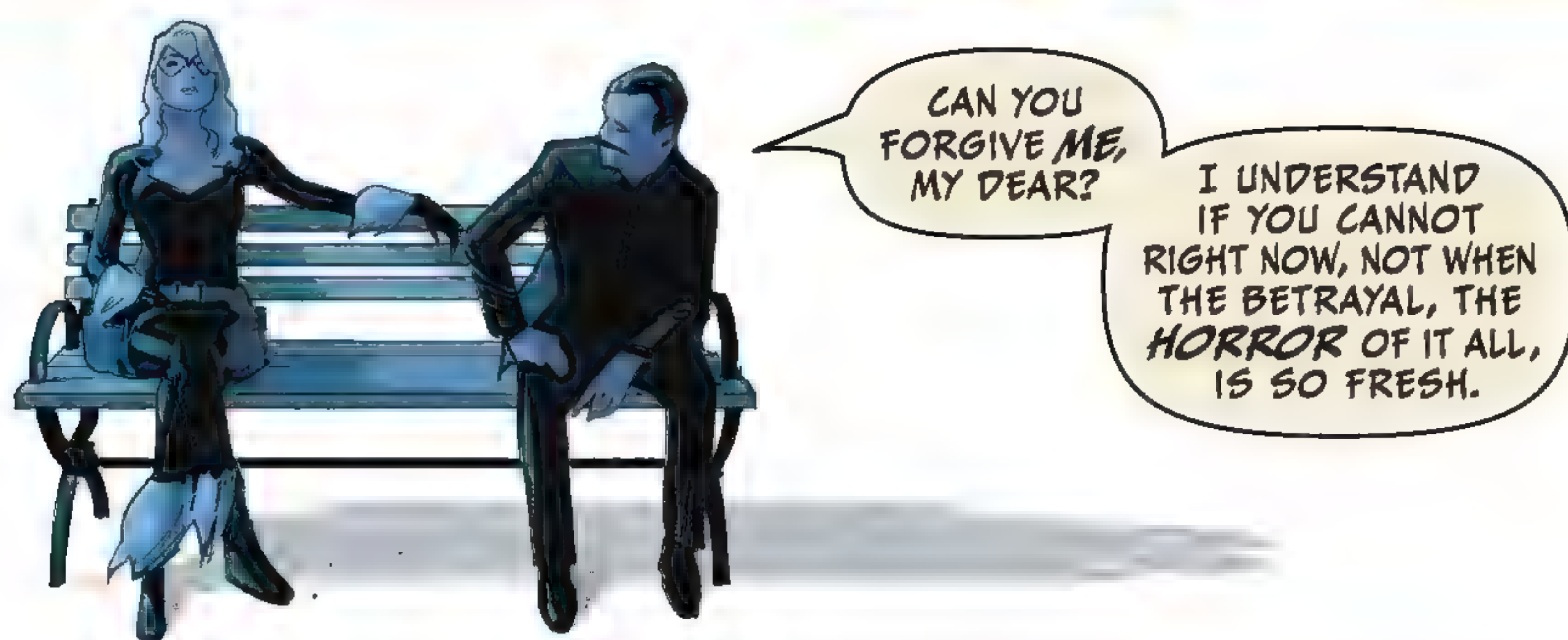
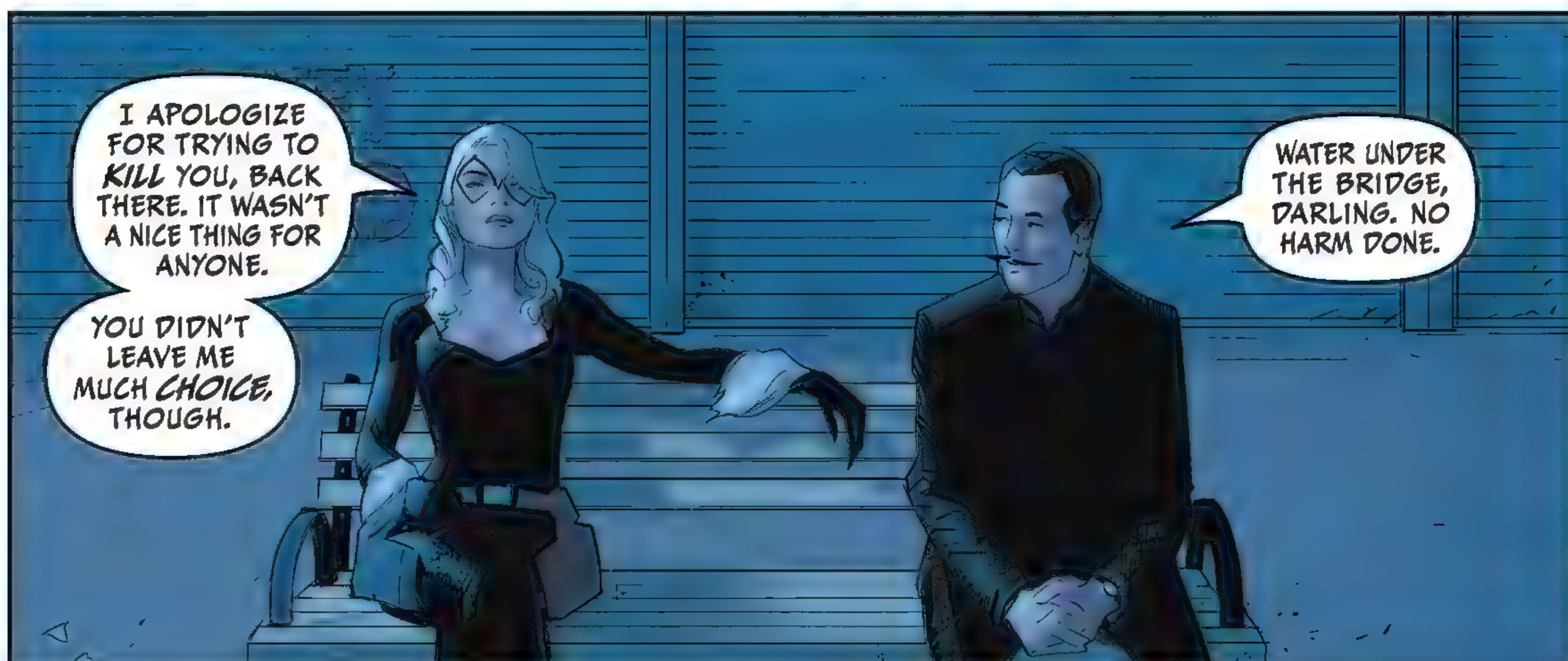
OKAY!
LET'S GET
THIS SHOW
ON THE
ROAD!





CONEY ISLAND.
NOW.





"LET ME
TELL YOU
WHERE I WENT."

THEN

"YOU MAY NOT
THINK MUCH
ABOUT SENDING
MANHATTAN TO
THE VAULTS."

"YOU'VE
NEVER
BEEN
THERE."

"BUT I
HAVE."

"I'VE BEEN
THERE
TODAY."

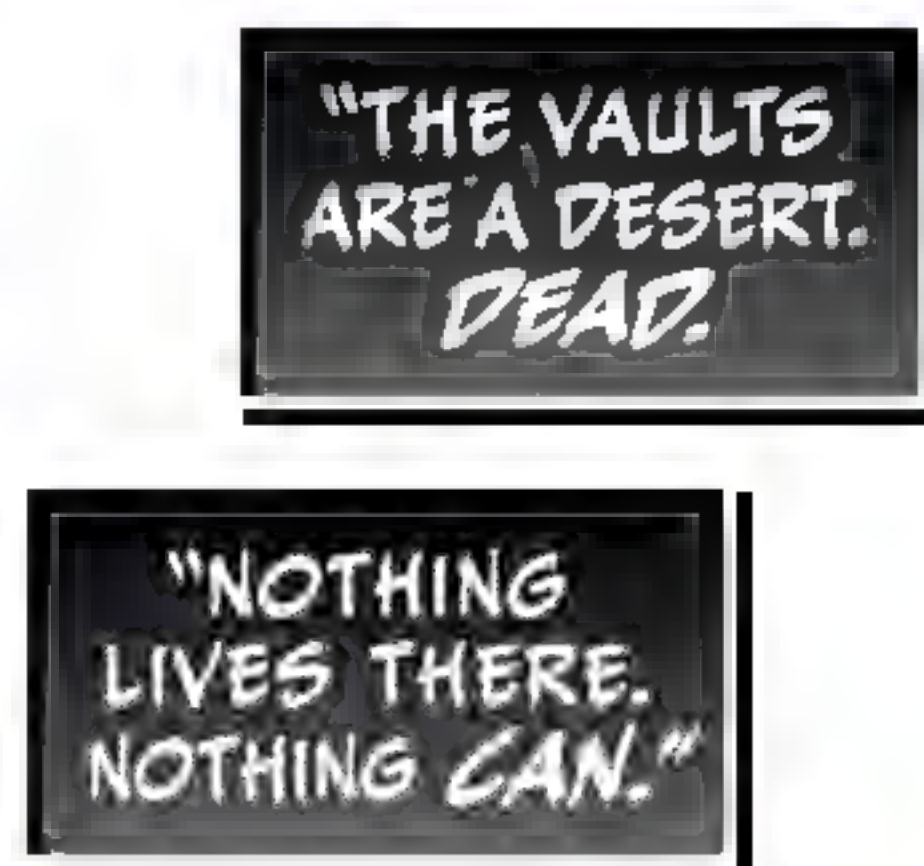
THE VAULTS. DOMAIN OF THE GILDED SAINT.

"DEAR LORD,
FELICIA."

"THAT'S NOT
POSSIBLE."

"IT'S VERY
POSSIBLE, FOX.
ANYONE CAN GO
TO THE VAULTS."

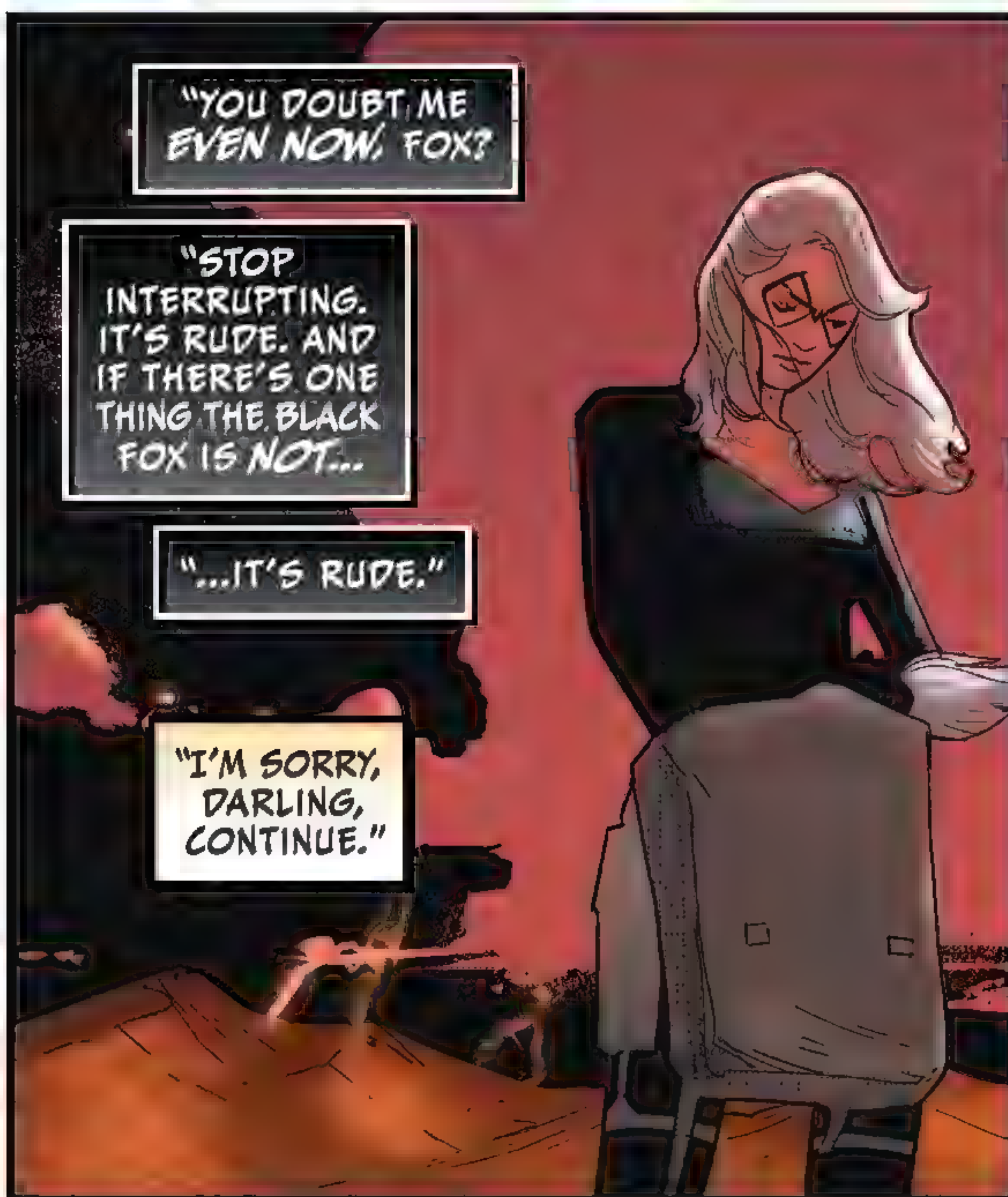
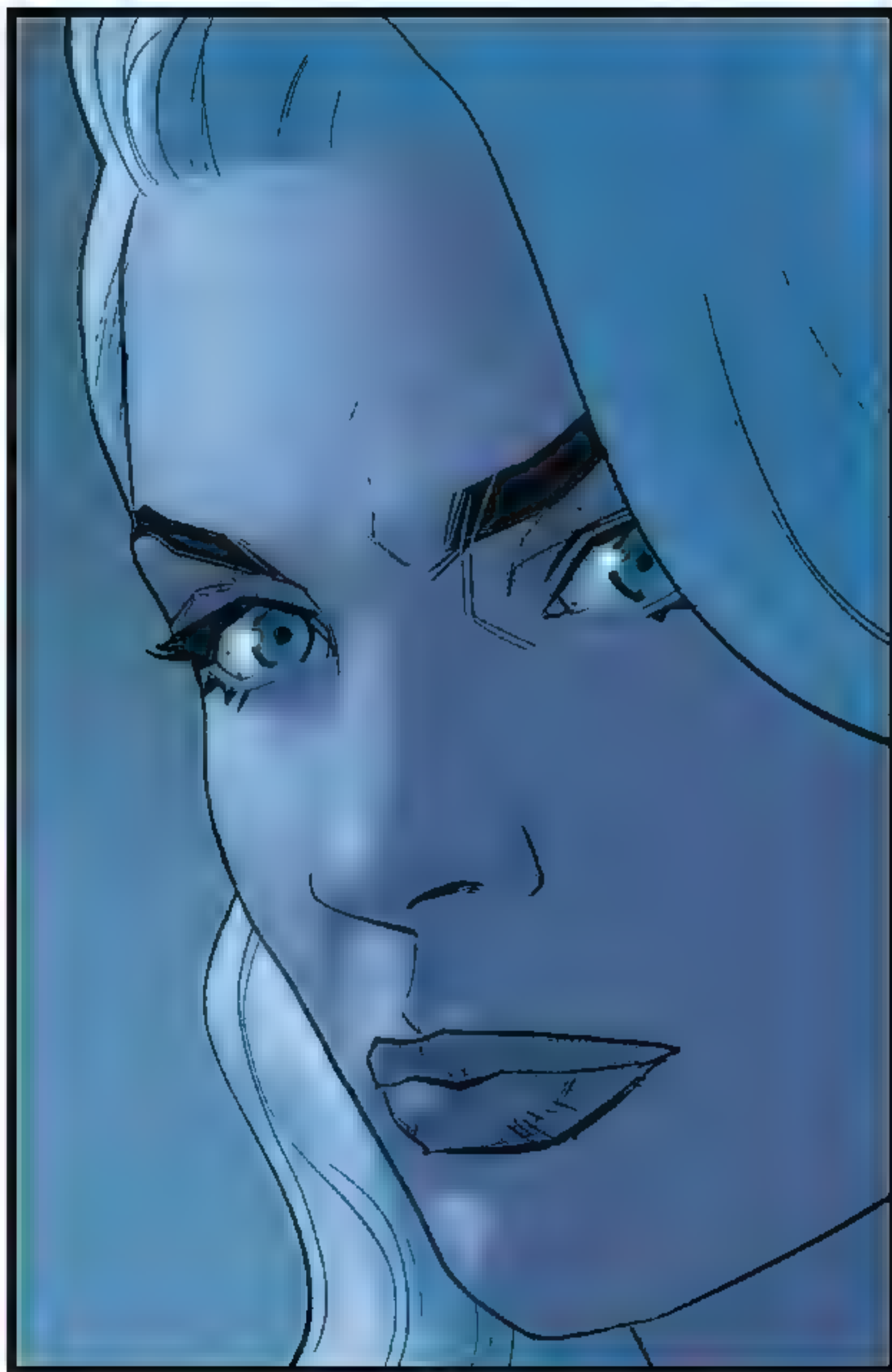






DARLING,
YOU EXPECT ME
TO BELIEVE THAT YOU
SENT YOURSELF TO
THE VAULTS?

YOU'VE
ALWAYS BEEN
HEADSTRONG,
BUT SURELY...



"YOU DOUBT ME
EVEN NOW, FOX?"

"STOP
INTERRUPTING.
IT'S RUDE. AND
IF THERE'S ONE
THING THE BLACK
FOX IS NOT...

"...IT'S RUDE."

"I'M SORRY,
DARLING,
CONTINUE."



"FINDING ONE SPECIFIC THING
IN THAT PLACE...? NEEDLE IN
A HAYSTACK DOESN'T BEGIN
TO DESCRIBE IT."

"BUT I HAD
AN EDGE. DON'T
I ALWAYS?"

"I'M NOT
ENTIRELY
SURE I
FOLLOW."



OF
COURSE
NOT.

BUT YOU
WILL.



"I WENT TO
THE VAULTS TO
SCOTCH YOUR
SCHEME, FOX."

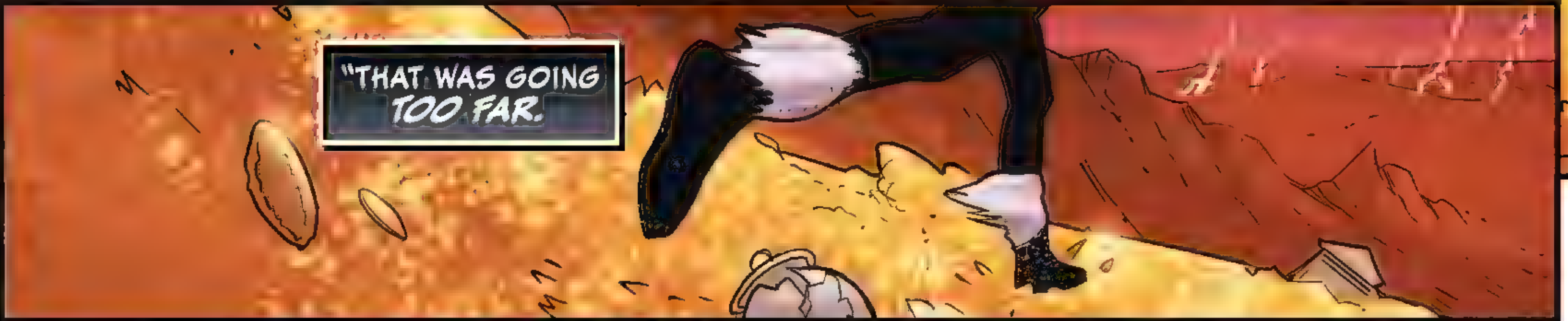
I'M NO
SUPER HERO.
YOU KNOW
THAT.

I'M NO
HERO, EVEN. I'VE
ALWAYS DONE WHAT
I NEEDED TO DO.
EVEN IF IT HURT
PEOPLE.

BUT
MANHATTAN?

EXCUSE ME--

--IS THAT
MY WATCH?

A close-up of a hand holding a blue wristwatch. The watch has a round face with a white dial and black hands. The hand is wearing a black glove. The background is a dark, textured surface.

"THAT WAS GOING
TOO FAR."



"MY CONSCIENCE
IS FLEXIBLE, FOX."

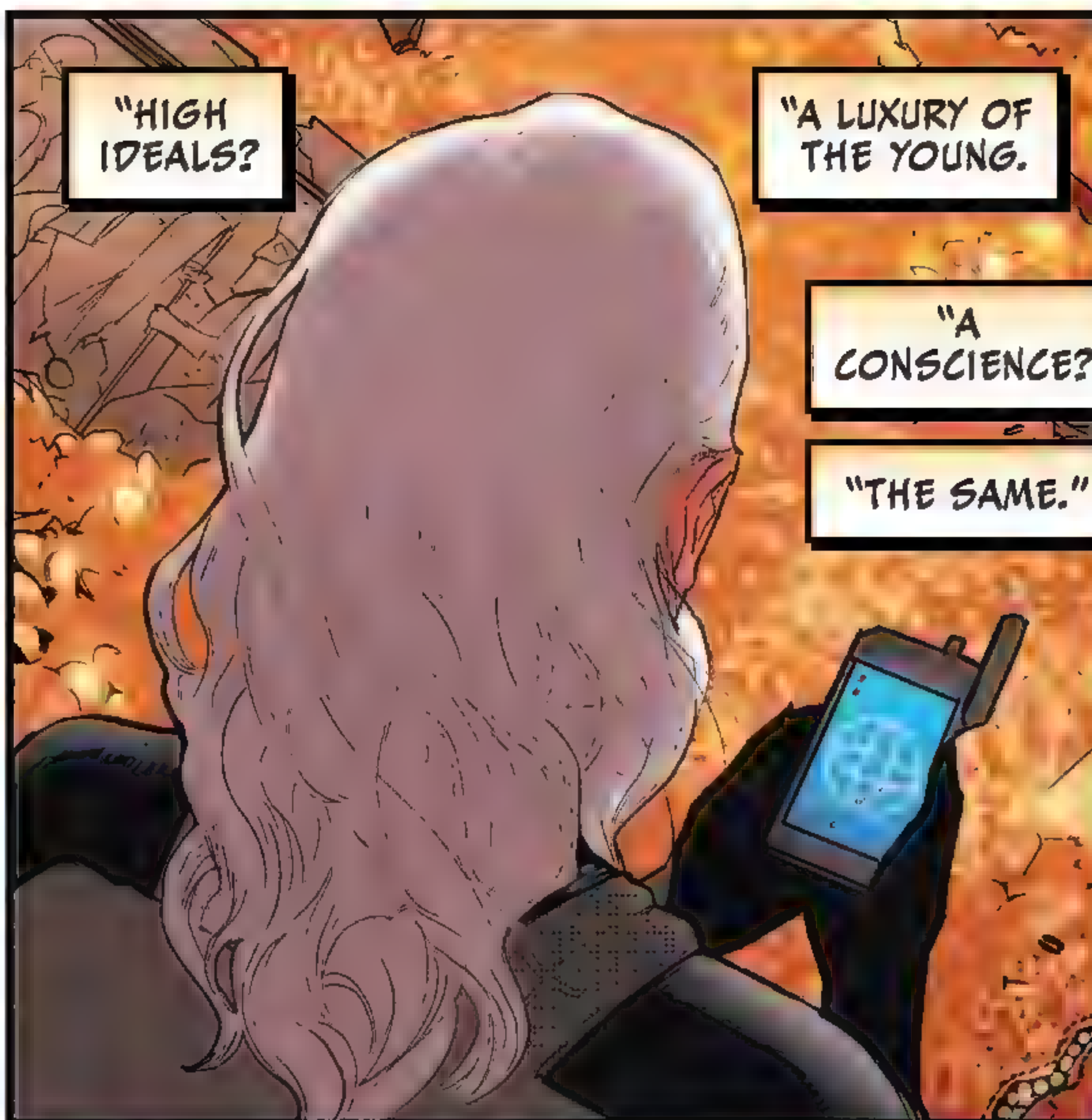
"BUT ONLY
SO MUCH."





I'VE SAID
IT MANY TIMES,
BUT I'LL SAY
IT AGAIN--

YOU ARE
YOUNG,
DARLING.



"HIGH
IDEALS?"

"A LUXURY OF
THE YOUNG.

"A
CONSCIENCE?"

"THE SAME."



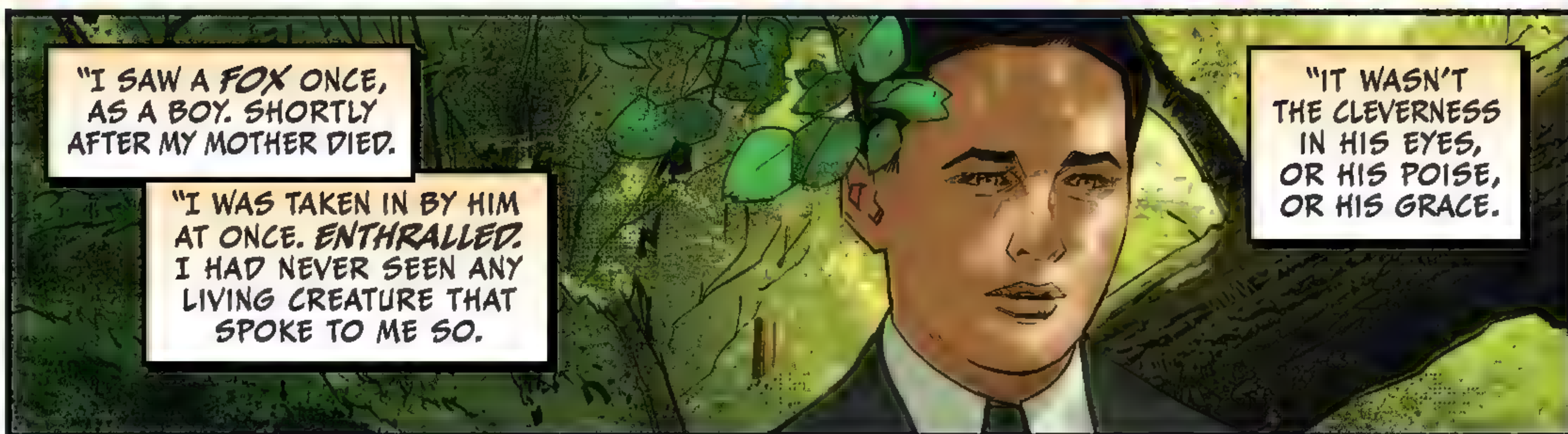
I'VE
ALWAYS BEEN
VERY HONEST ABOUT
MY *COWARDICE*.
I'VE NEVER PLAYED
AT BEING A BRAVE
MAN.

I DON'T
WANT TO DIE,
AND I'LL DO
ANYTHING TO
CHEAT IT.



"IT'S ALWAYS
BEEN RIGHT
THERE, IN WHAT
I *CALL* MYSELF.

"DID I EVER TELL
YOU THAT STORY?"



"I SAW A *FOX* ONCE,
AS A BOY. SHORTLY
AFTER MY MOTHER DIED.

"I WAS TAKEN IN BY HIM
AT ONCE. *ENTHRALLED*.
I HAD NEVER SEEN ANY
LIVING CREATURE THAT
SPOKE TO ME SO.

"IT WASN'T
THE CLEVERNESS
IN HIS EYES,
OR HIS POISE,
OR HIS GRACE.



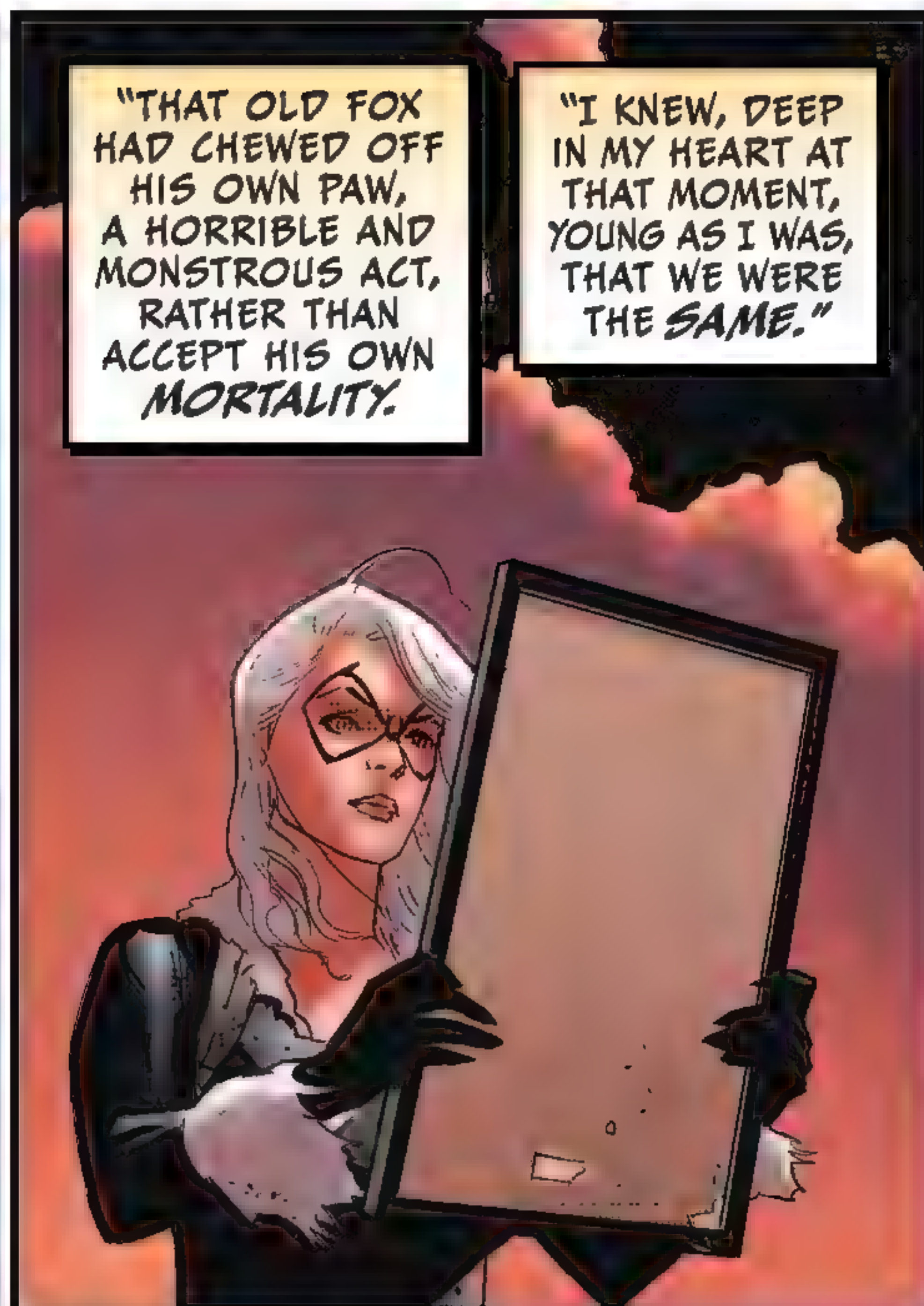
"NO.

"IT WAS THAT HE HAD
BUT *THREE PAWS*."



I HAD HEARD
STORIES AS A BOY,
OF COURSE, OF FOXES
BEING CAUGHT IN
TRAPS. CHEWING OFF
THEIR OWN PAW TO
ESCAPE DEATH.

BUT SEEING
THAT, IT MADE
MY ENTIRE LIFE,
MY ENTIRE *SELF*
MAKE SENSE.



"THAT OLD FOX
HAD CHEWED OFF
HIS OWN PAW,
A HORRIBLE AND
MONSTROUS ACT,
RATHER THAN
ACCEPT HIS OWN
MORTALITY."

"I KNEW, DEEP
IN MY HEART AT
THAT MOMENT,
YOUNG AS I WAS,
THAT WE WERE
THE *SAME*."

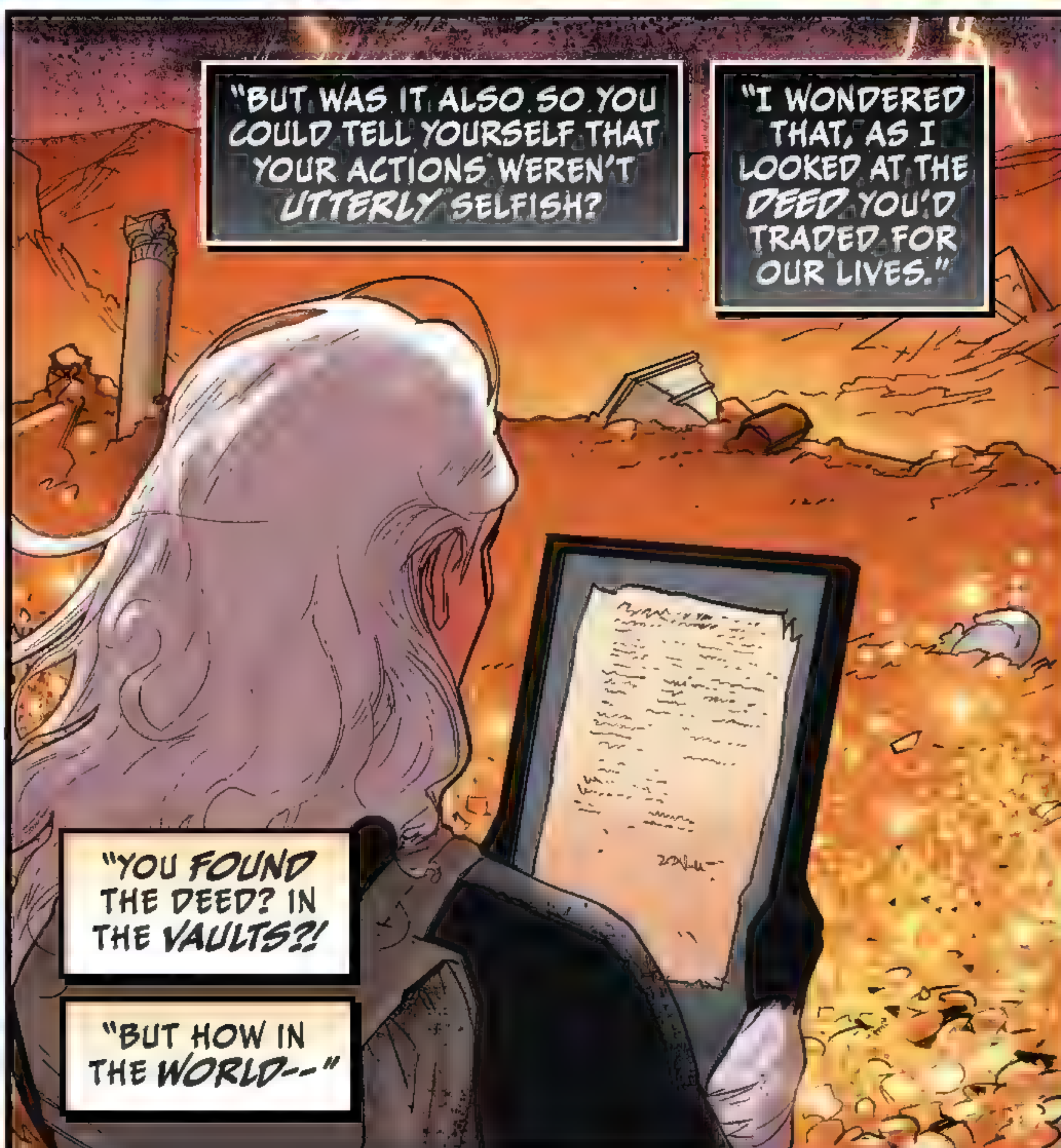


IT WASN'T
UNTIL MANY YEARS
LATER THAT I
REALIZED EXACTLY
HOW RIGHT I HAD
BEEEN.



YOU SAID
YOU INCLUDED ME
IN THE DEAL WITH THE
SAINT BECAUSE YOU
LOVED ME.

I DON'T
DOUBT THAT'S
TRUE.



"BUT WAS IT ALSO SO YOU
COULD TELL YOURSELF THAT
YOUR ACTIONS WEREN'T
UTTERLY SELFISH?"

"I WONDERED
THAT, AS I
LOOKED AT THE
DEED YOU'D
TRADED FOR
OUR LIVES."

"YOU FOUND
THE DEED? IN
THE VAULTS?!"

"BUT HOW IN
THE WORLD--"



REMEMBER
THE *QUEEN CAT*
THING?

REMEMBER
HOW WE
TRACKED *HER*
DOWN?



"I HAD THE
DEED CHIPPED.
I COULD TRACK
IT ANYWHERE.
REMEMBER?"

"ARE YOU
STARTING
TO SEE THE
SHAPE
OF IT?"



"ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT
YOU *STOLE* THE DEED *BACK*
FROM THE GILDED SAINT?!"

"NO, OF *COURSE* NOT.
YOU'RE NOT AN OLD MAN
RIGHT NOW, ARE YOU?"

"THE DEED
IS STILL IN
THE VAULTS,
AS PER YOUR
AGREEMENT."

RATTLE RATTLE RATTLE RATTLE RATTLE



LITTLE
CREATURE.

WHAT
ARE YOU DOING IN
MY VAULTS?

HAVE YOU COME
TO JOIN MY
COLLECTION?

WARRING!!



NO.

I'VE
COME TO MAKE
A DEAL.



WHAT
KIND OF
DEAL?



WHAT
KIND OF
DEAL?



FIRST.

I WANT
OUT OF THE
BLACK FOX'S
DEAL.

I WAS
BROUGHT IN
WITHOUT MY
CONSENT, AND
I DON'T WANT
ANY PART
OF IT.

YOU
WOULD
GIVE UP
ETERNAL
LIFE?

DID I
STUTTER?



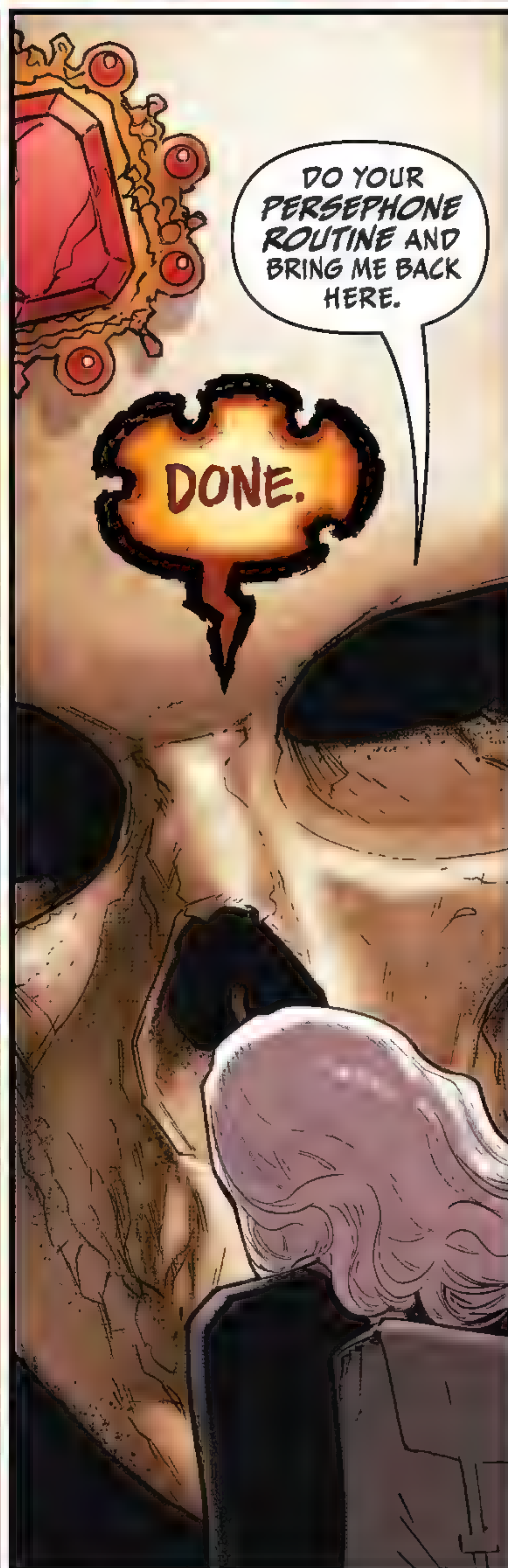
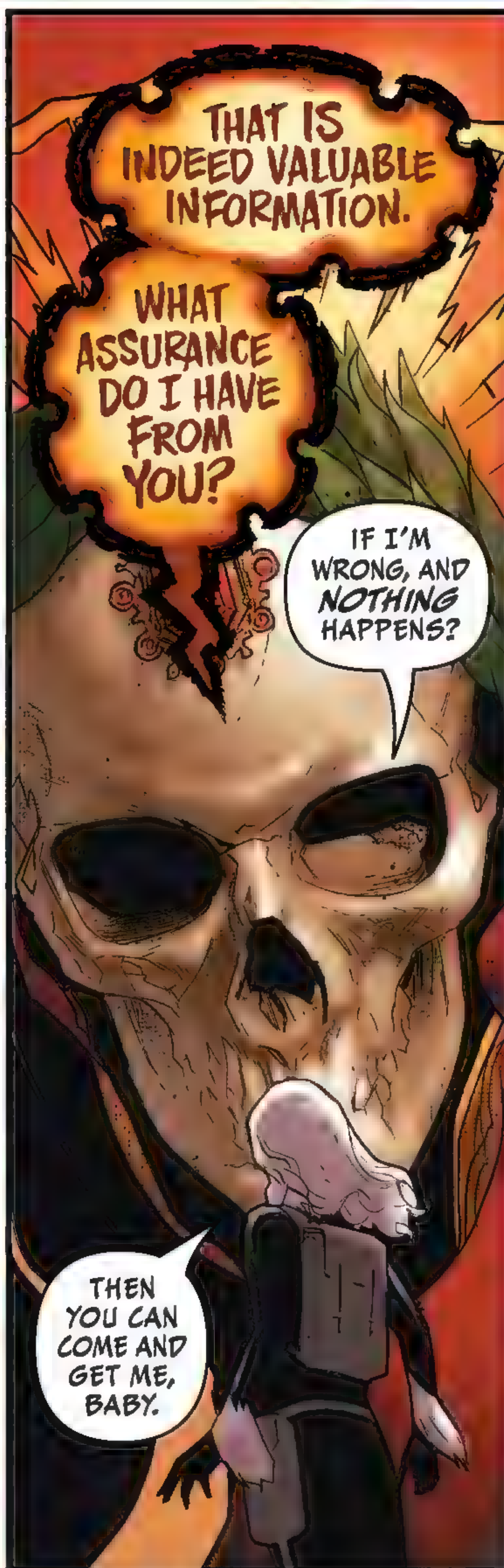
IT COSTS
ME NOTHING.
DONE.

NOW.
"FIRST"
IMPLIES A
SECOND
DEMAND.

YOU
GOT THAT
RIGHT.

I WANT
OUT OF
HERE.

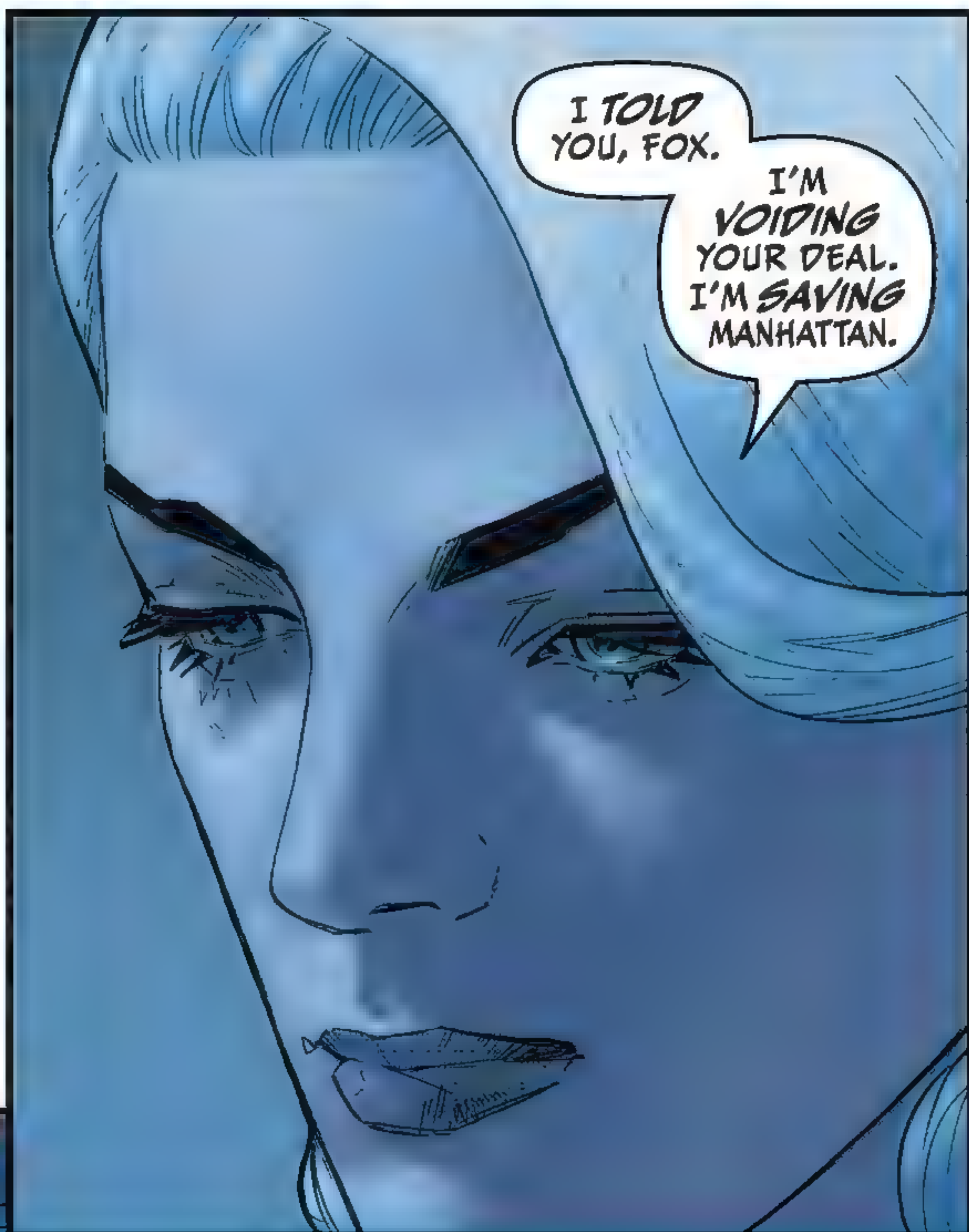
IMPOSSIBLE.





Oh,
YOU HAD ME
WORRIED.

I CANNOT BELIEVE YOU
WENT TO THE VAULTS, AND
BLUFFED YOUR WAY OUT.
BUT TO WHAT END?



I TOLD
YOU, FOX.

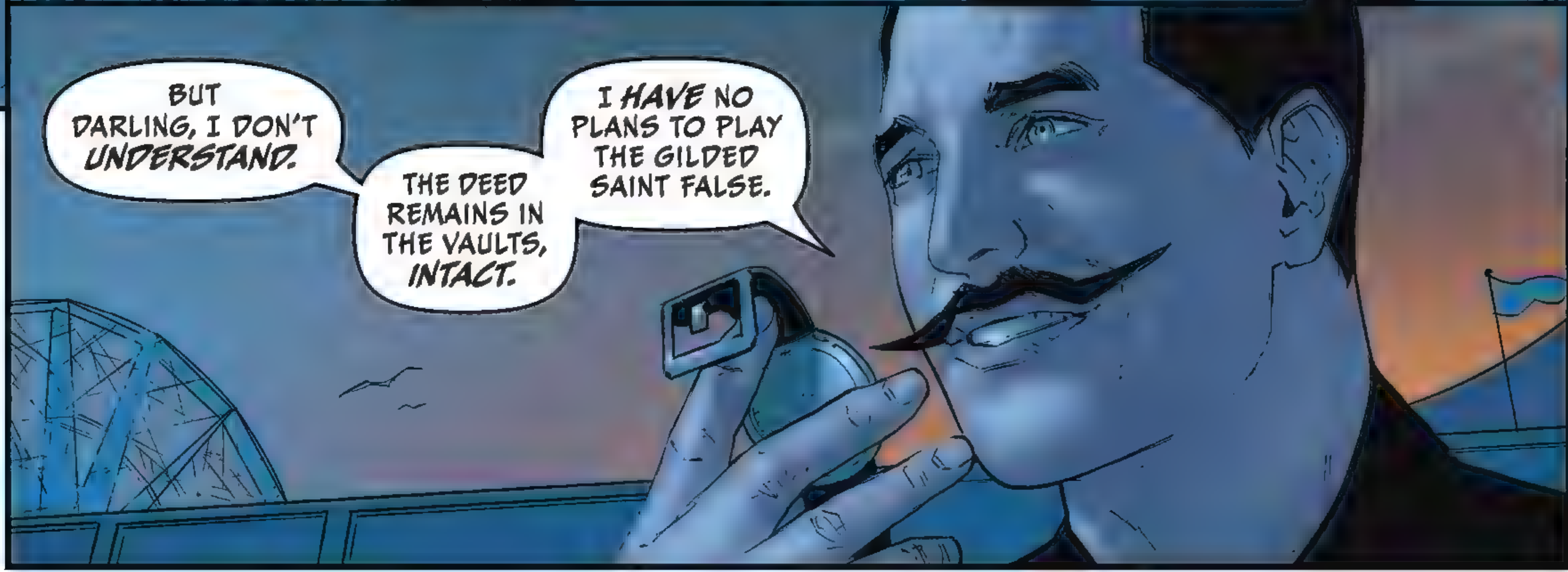
I'M
VOIDING
YOUR DEAL.
I'M SAVING
MANHATTAN.

CONEY
ISLAND



TIME'S UP,
FOXY.

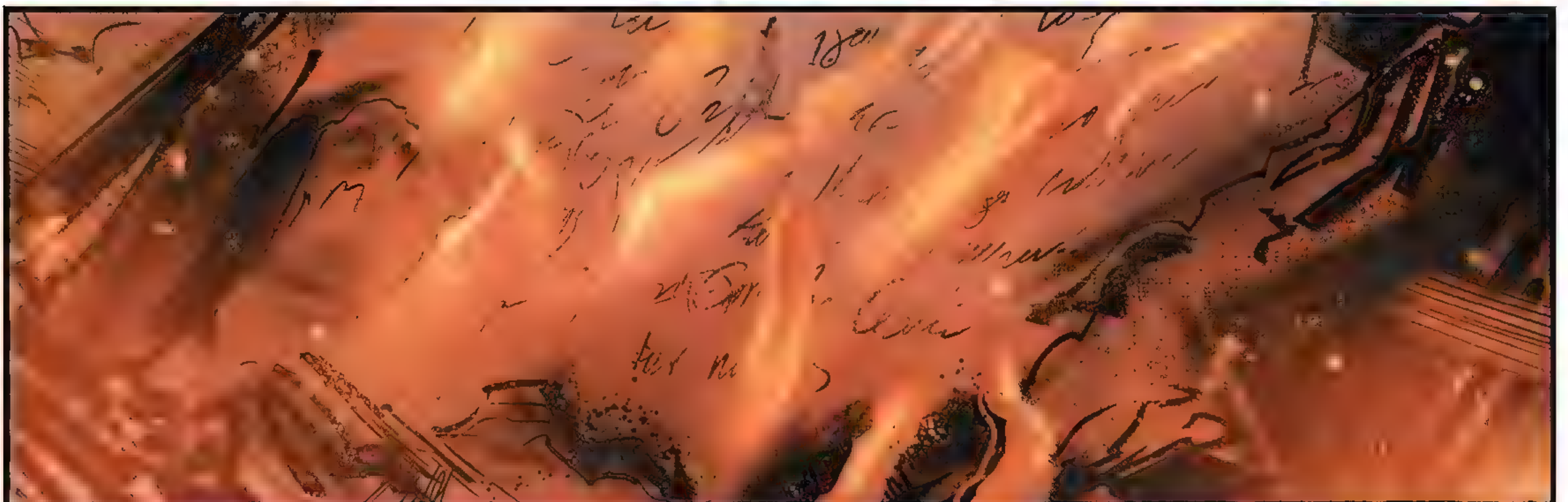
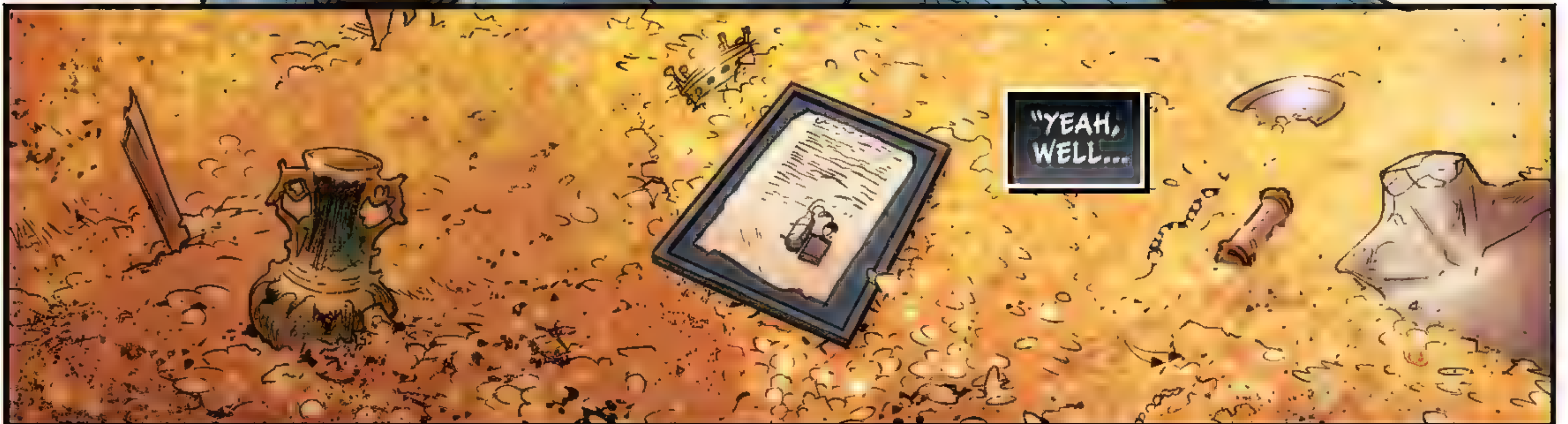
I'M
SORRY FOR
WHAT COMES
NEXT.



BUT
DARLING, I DON'T
UNDERSTAND.

THE DEED
REMAINS IN
THE VAULTS,
INTACT.

I HAVE NO
PLANS TO PLAY
THE GILDED
SAINT FALSE.





WHAT DID YOU DO?



I DID WHAT I ALWAYS DO: WHAT I HAD TO.

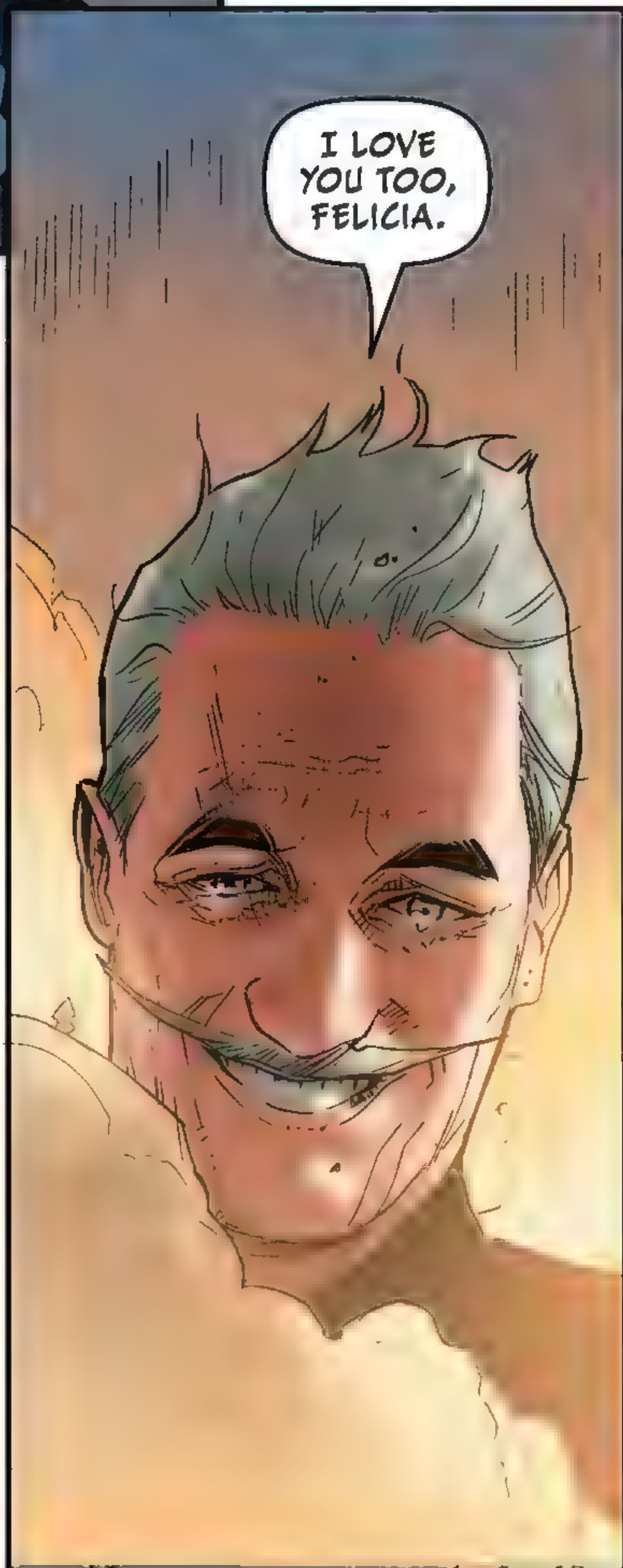
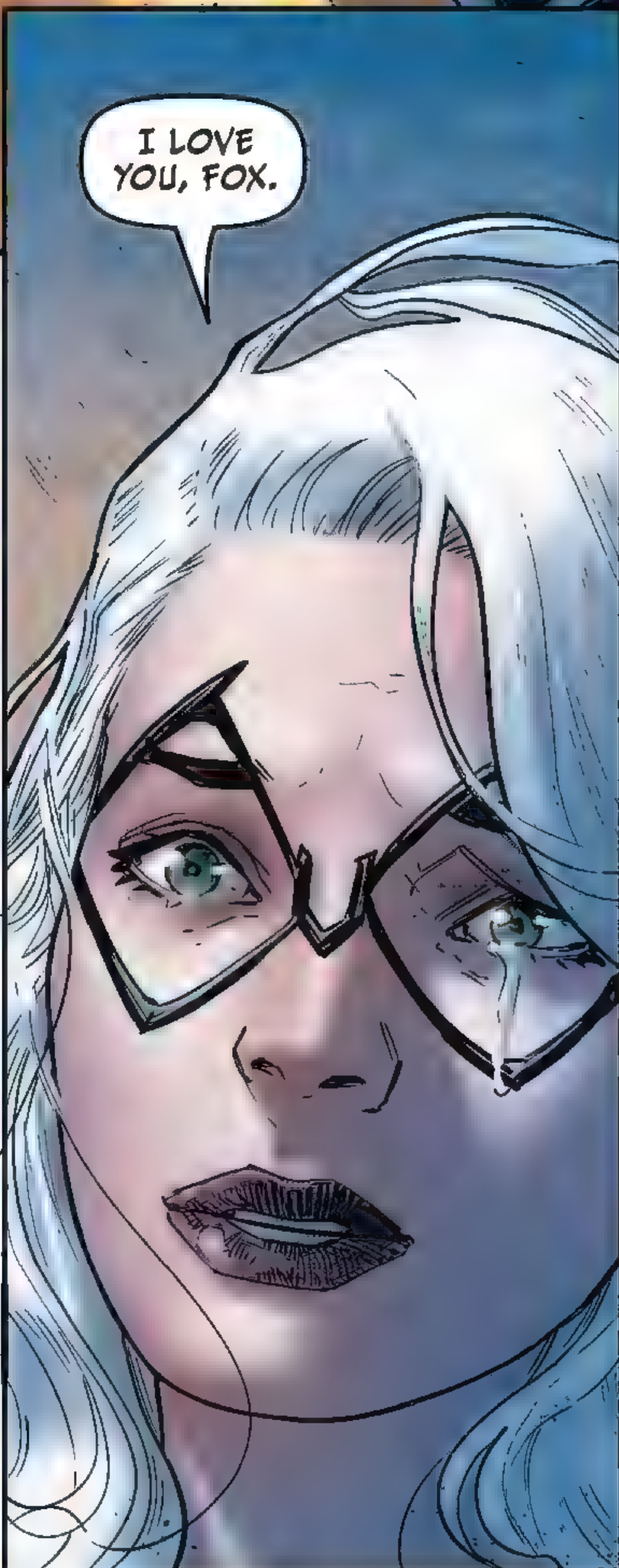
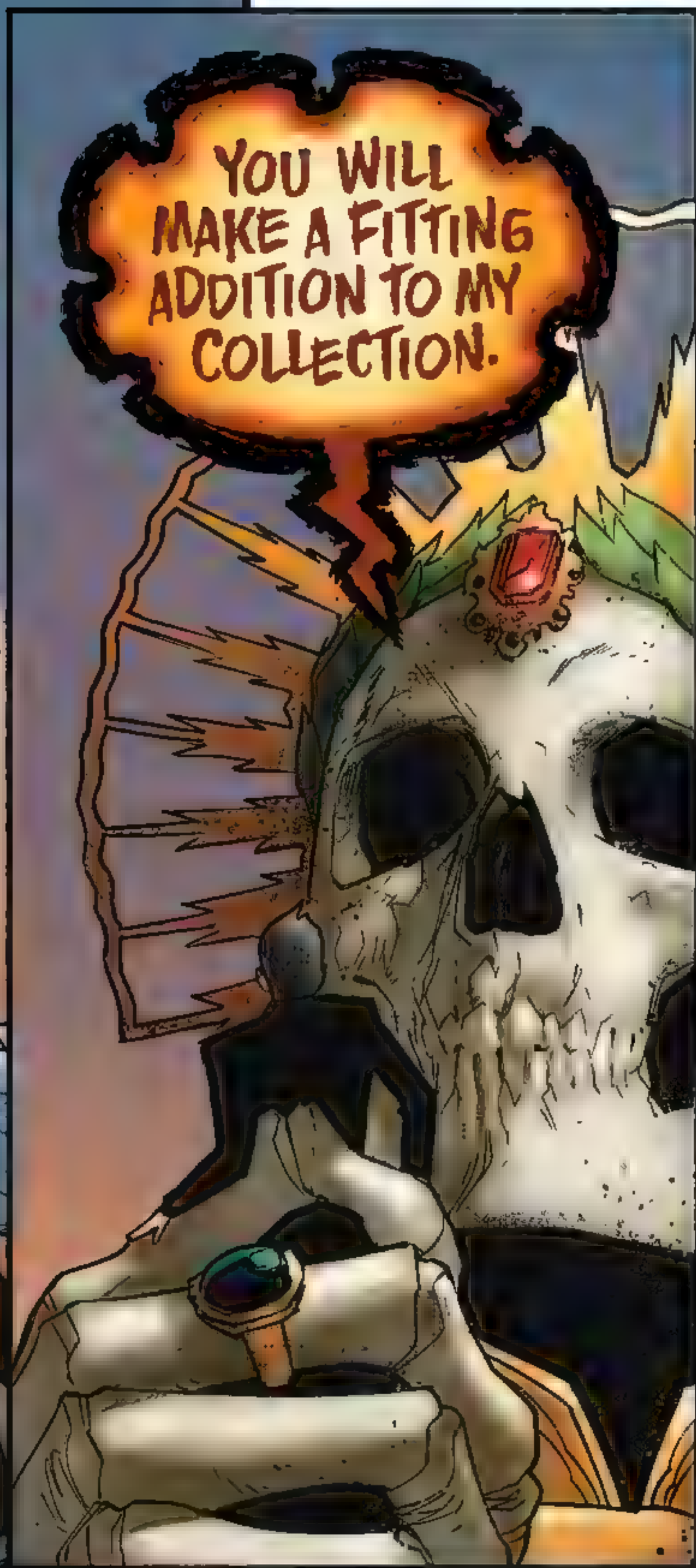
NO MATTER WHO IT HURTS.

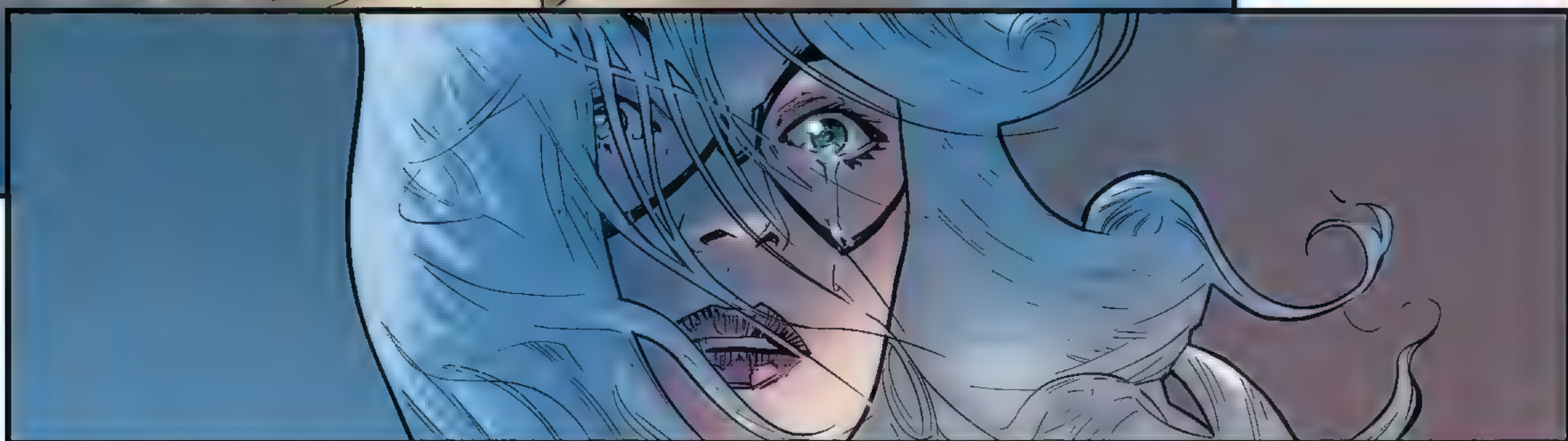
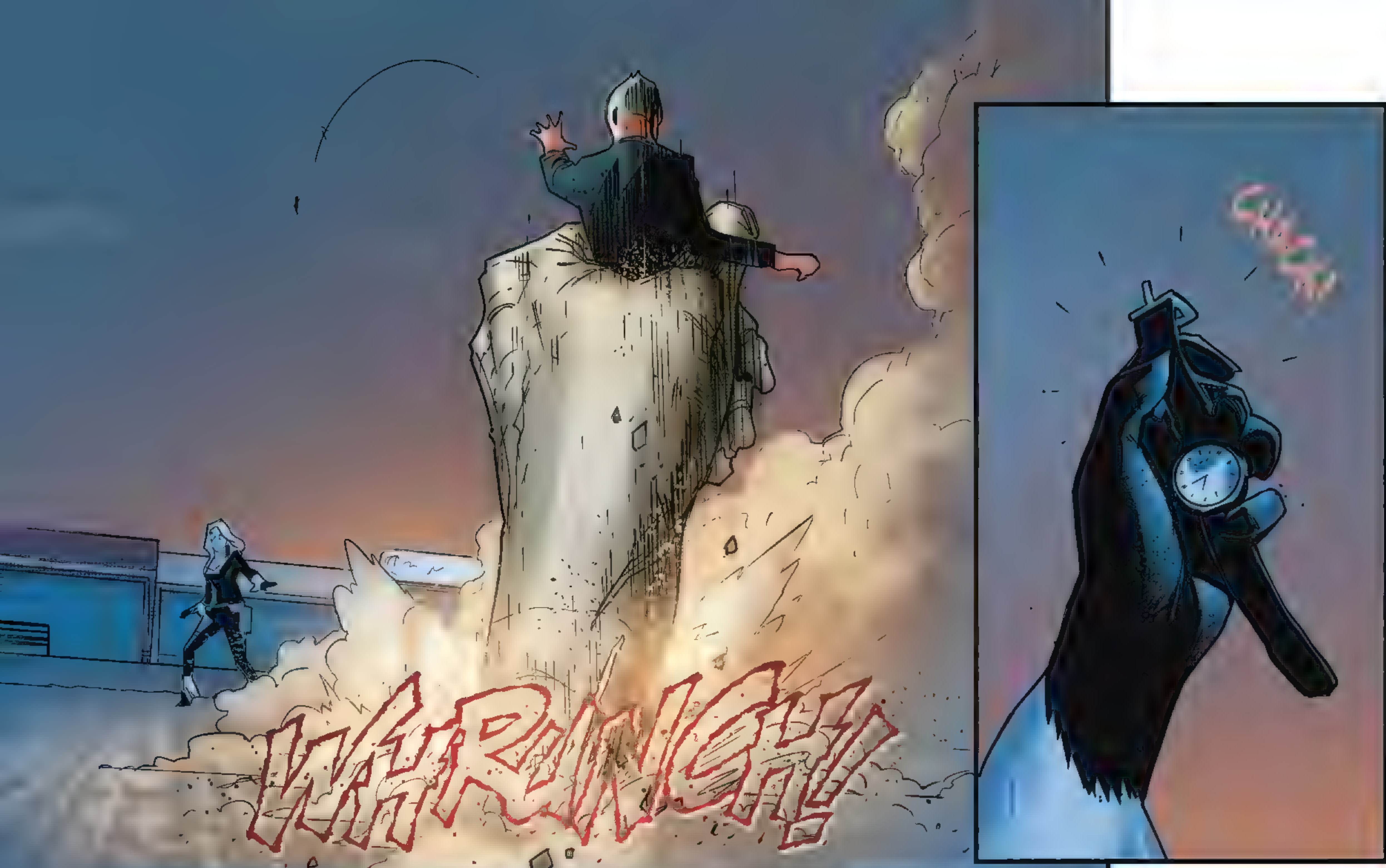


BLACK FOX!

YOU HAVE BROKEN OUR AGREEMENT!

WIZARD







LATER.
THE BAR WITH NO NAME.
THE VICTORY PARTY.



"I GUESS WE
DID AT THAT."



"ARE YOU
ALL RIGHT?
I HATED HIM,
OF COURSE."

"BUT YOU
LOVED HIM,
DIDN'T YOU?"



"OF
COURSE
I DID."

"BUT THAT
DIDN'T
MATTER IN
THE END,
DID IT."



"YOU DID WHAT
YOU HAD TO DO."

ENOUGH
ABOUT
HURTS.

THE CITY IS
SAVED. THE GUILD'S
DEAL IS BACK IN PLACE.
THE BLACK FOX IS OFF
THE BOARD. LIFE IS
SPLENDID, ONCE
AGAIN.

AND
WHERE DOES
THAT LEAVE
US?



US?

US.

WE ARE *FINE*.
YOU ELIMINATED
THE BLACK FOX.
OUR WAR IS...
PUT TO BED.

WHAT
ARE--

Hush...

THIS...

THIS
CANNOT
POSSIBLY
WORK.

NO.
PROBABLY
NOT.

BUT THAT
SOUNDS LIKE
TOMORROW'S
PROBLEM.

AND BEFORE
TOMORROW BRINGS
ALL OF THE PROBLEMS
THAT TOMORROW
BRINGS...

...I FEEL LIKE
CELEBRATING...



DO I SEE
A FUTURE WITH
ODESSA DRAKE--

--THE BEAUTIFUL WOMAN WITH
HER *OWN* OBSESSIONS?

NO.

NOT WITH OUR LIVES
BEING WHAT THEY ARE, WITH
US BEING WHO WE ARE.

BUT WE SAVED
THE CITY TODAY.
THE TWO OF US.

AND SOMETIMES,
FOR ONE NIGHT...

...THAT'S
ENOUGH.



BLACK CAT ANNUAL (2021) 1

NOTE: This story was originally meant to occur between *Black Cat* (2019) #10-11, as evidenced by #12's footnote and mention of a recent Korean adventure. When the issue was delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic the story was slightly rewritten, and now occurs between *Black Cat* (2020) #7-8.

LOOK, HERE'S THE THING.

LIFE'S BEEN DIFFICULT FOR ME LATELY. LOTS OF DRAMA. LOTS OF TEARS.

LOTS OF ALMOST GETTING MANHATTAN PULLED INTO MONEY-HELL.

SO I FIGURED ON A VACATION. FUN IN THE SUN. MEET NEW AND INTERESTING PEOPLE, STEAL THEIR STUFF. YOU KNOW.

WHICH MAKES GETTING PINCHED ON A STOPOVER AT INCHEON AIRPORT REALLY EMBARRASSING.

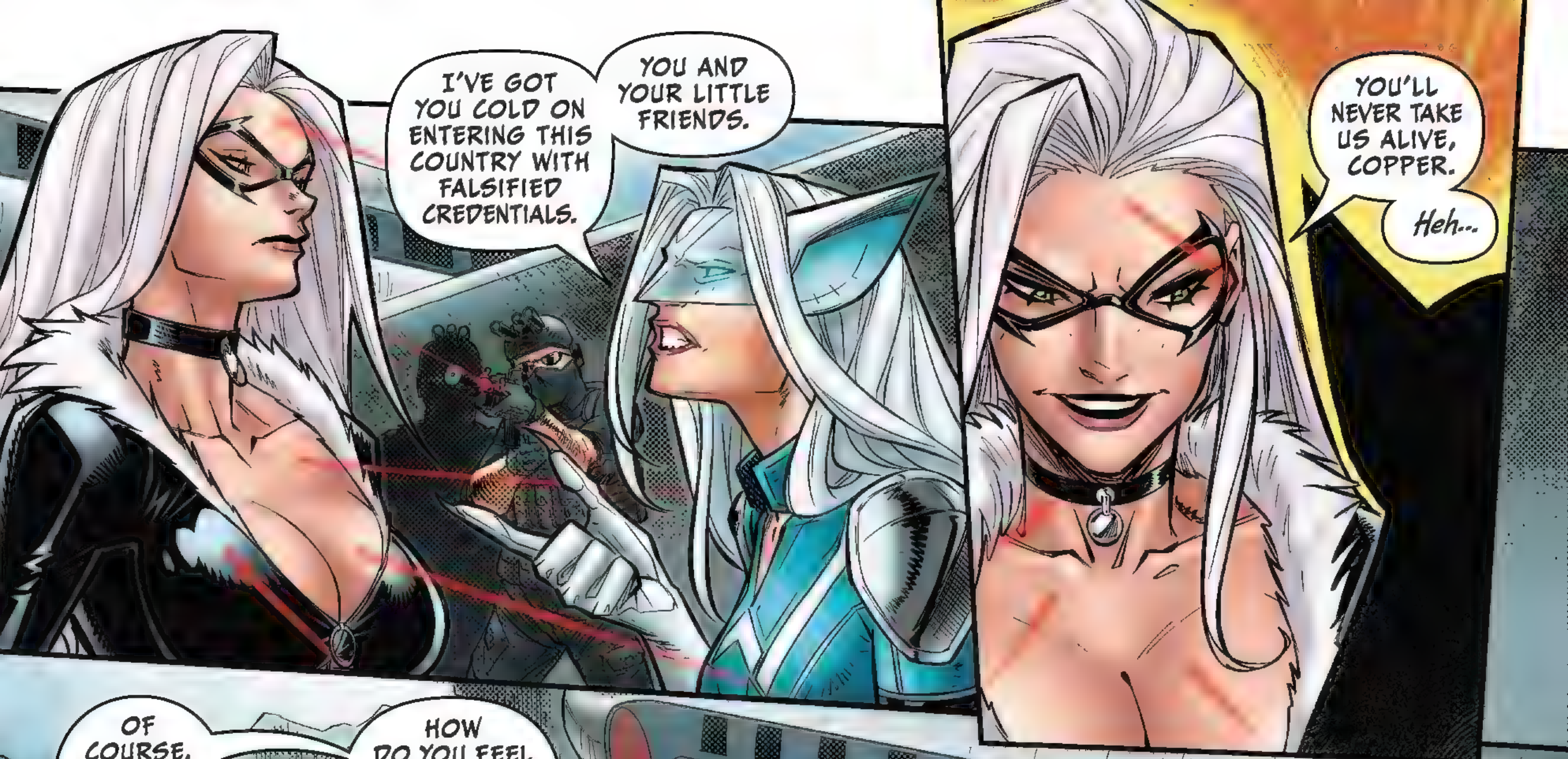
SO WHO ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO BE?

THE WHITE FOX. NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE.

WELL, I'M THE BLACK CAT--

I KNOW WHO YOU ARE.





I'VE GOT YOU COLD ON ENTERING THIS COUNTRY WITH FALSIFIED CREDENTIALS.

YOU AND YOUR LITTLE FRIENDS.

YOU'LL NEVER TAKE US ALIVE, COPPER.
Heh...



OF COURSE, THIS COULD ALL GO AWAY...

GO ON...

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT DOING A JOB FOR THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA?



JUST YOU.

IT WILL BE WORTH YOUR WHILE.

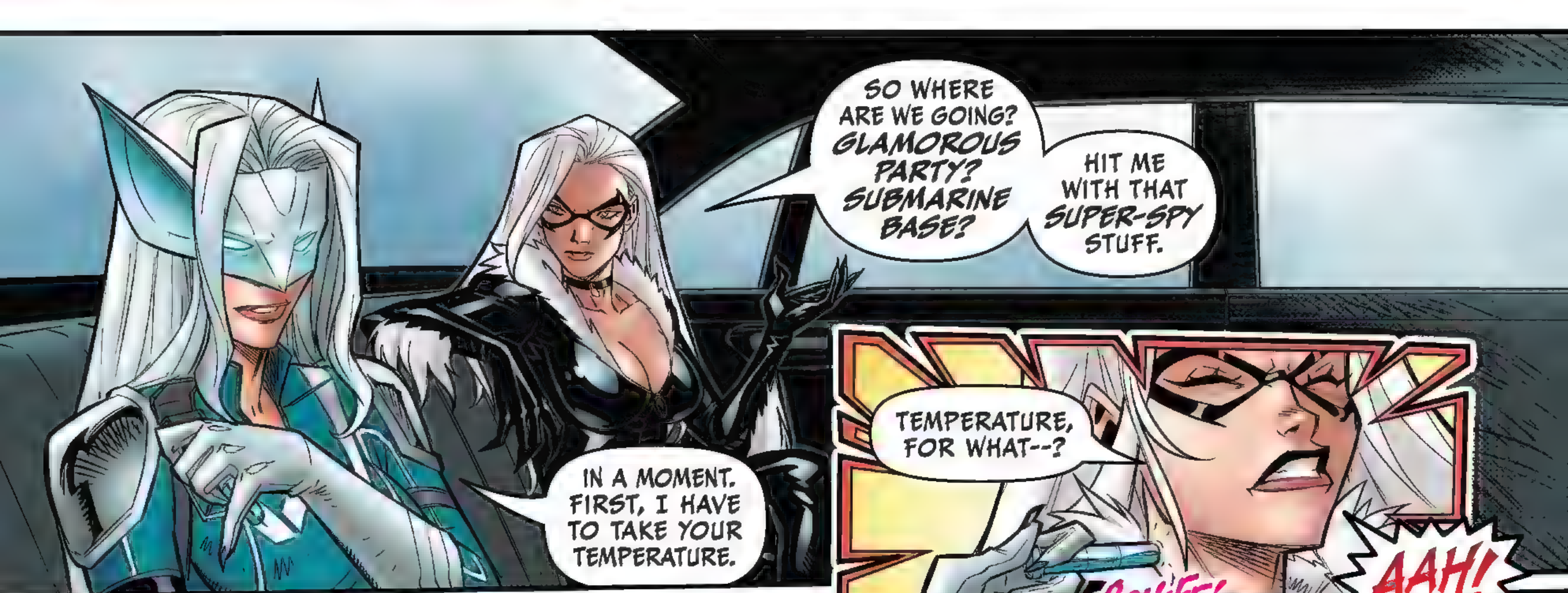
NOW YOU'RE SPEAKING MY LANGUAGE, LADY.

I'VE GOT A WORK ETHIC LIKE YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE.



THAT, AND I ALWAYS GET SO BORED DURING LAYOVERS.

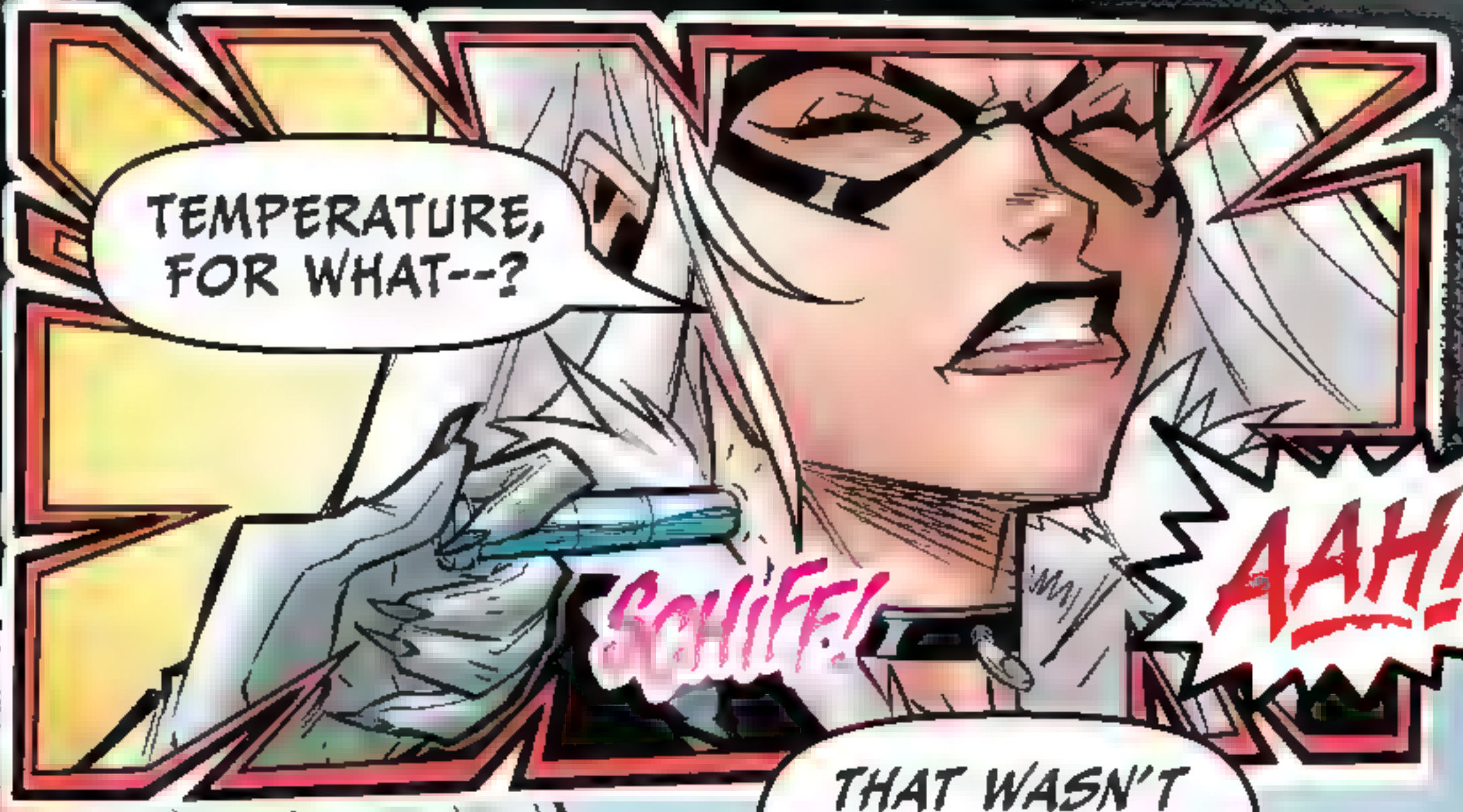
YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF AN ACCOMPLICE, G-LADY.



SO WHERE ARE WE GOING? GLAMOROUS PARTY? SUBMARINE BASE?

HIT ME WITH THAT SUPER-SPY STUFF.

IN A MOMENT. FIRST, I HAVE TO TAKE YOUR TEMPERATURE.



TEMPERATURE, FOR WHAT--?

SCHIFFE!

AAH!

THAT WASN'T "TAKING MY TEMPERATURE"!



NO, YOU'RE RIGHT-- I LIED.

THAT WAS A TRANSLATOR IMPLANT. CONGRATULATIONS, YOU NOW UNDERSTAND KOREAN.



YOU LIED?!

I'M A SUPER-SPY, I LIE ALL THE TIME.

TRY AND KEEP UP.

I DON'T THINK I LIKE MY NEW PARTNER.



THE JOB. TELL ME ABOUT THE JOB.

I LEAD TIGER DIVISION, THE N.I.S. SUPERHUMAN RESPONSE TEAM.

DO YOU KNOW OF TAEГУKGI, ONE OF OUR HEROES?

SURE. THE KOREAN HYPERION, RIGHT? HEAVY HITTER.

WE PREFER TO CALL HYPERION THE AMERICAN TAEГУKGI.

REGARDLESS, HE IS STRONG, INVULNERABLE, CAN FLY, ETC.

PATRIOT, HERO, AND THE HEART OF OUR TEAM.

HE'S ALSO BEEN COMPROMISED.

COMPROMISED?

ISN'T THIS GUY
ON PAR WITH THE
BLUE MARVEL? WITH
THE *SENTRY*?

A GANGSTER
FAMILY CALLED THE
CHOI FACTION
CLAIM TO HAVE HIM
UNDER *THEIR*
CONTROL.

A SUPERHUMAN
WITH *TAEGUKGI*'S POWER,
LET LOOSE ON A CITY WITH
THE POPULATION DENSITY
OF SEOUL...IT WOULD BE
APOCALYPTIC.

NOT TO
MENTION
THAT HE'S A
NATIONAL
ICON...

THEY'RE
DEMANDING THAT
THE GOVERNMENT
CEDE CONTROL TO
THEM, OR THEY'LL
UNLEASH *TAEGUKGI*
ON *SEOUL*.

SO A BUNCH OF
GANGSTERS HAVE
YOUR STRONGEST
SUPERHUMAN
UNDER THEIR
CONTROL...

...AND THEY WANT TO
TURN THE COUNTRY INTO A
GANGSTER-DICTATORSHIP
WITH THEM ON TOP?

THAT
IS ABOUT
THE STATE
OF IT.

SO WHAT'S
THE PAY?

YOU WILL
NOT BE PAID. I
LIED AGAIN-- THAT
WASN'T JUST A
TRANSLATOR.

IT WAS
A *BOMB*
TOO.

**BURAMSAN MOUNTAIN. TIGER DIVISION BASE.
LATER.**

...LOOK, ALL
I'M SAYING
IS THAT YOU
DESERVED
IT.

THAT WAS
A **SUCKER**
PUNCH.

SO BLOW
MY HEAD
OFF, THEN,
WHY DON'T
YOU.

I TOLD YOU,
IT'S JUST A
NANOMUNITION--
YOU WOULD
BLEED OUT
INTERNALLY.

AND IF YOU
THINK I WAS
GOING TO TELL
YOU A HORRIFYING
STATE SECRET
WITHOUT **SOME**
INSURANCE,
WELL...

**BLACK
CAT...**

...MEET TIGER DIVISION!

THE GENERAL.

The totem that walks like a man.

MR. ENIGMA.

Unkillable brawler-god of the Seoul streets.

LUNA SNOW.

Cryokinetic pop star and Agent of Atlas. Only here for the emergency.

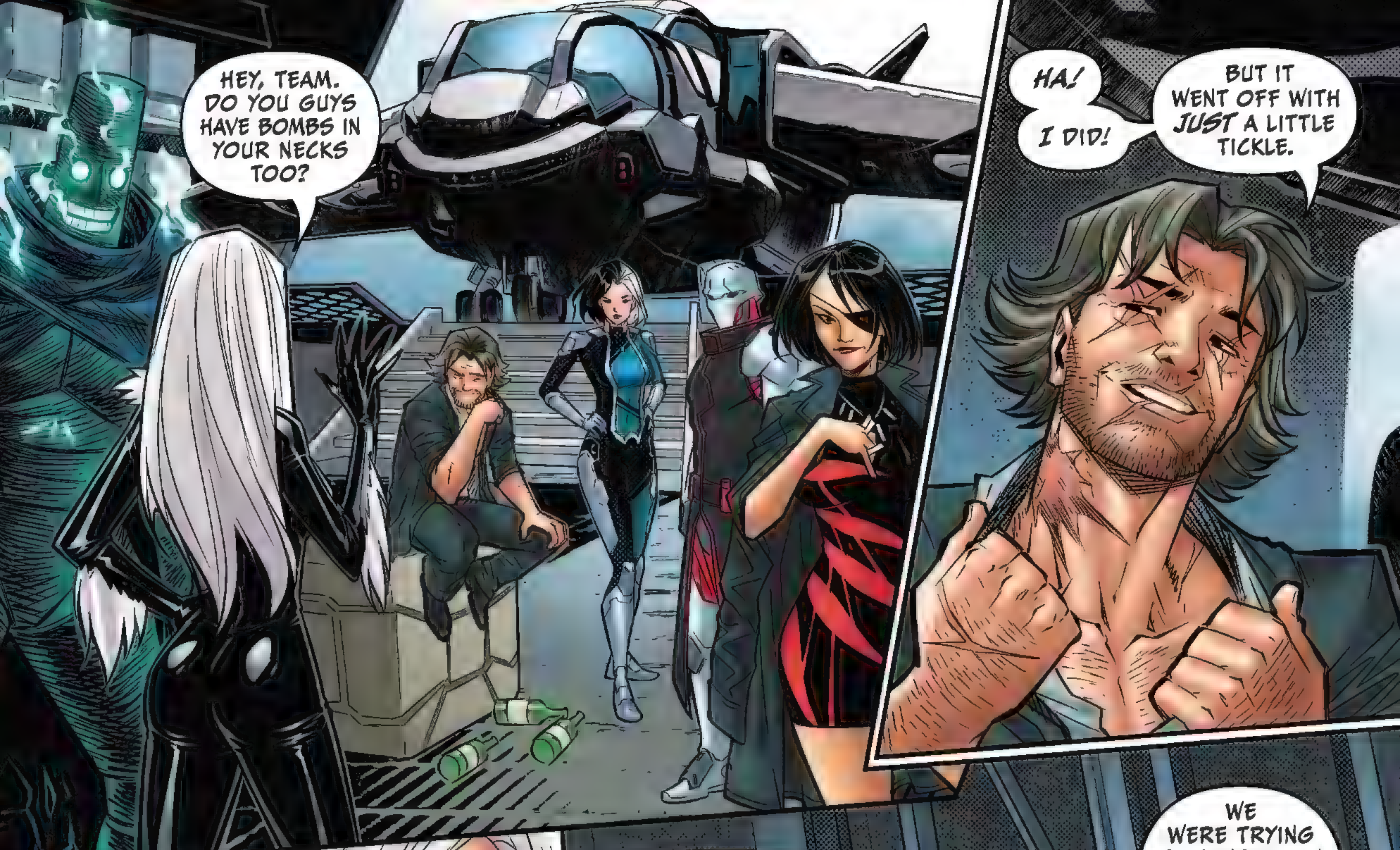
GON-R II.

Robot rookie with big shoes to fill.

AUNTIE ANTE.

Canny gambler-sorceress with a deck of magical playing cards. Older than she looks.

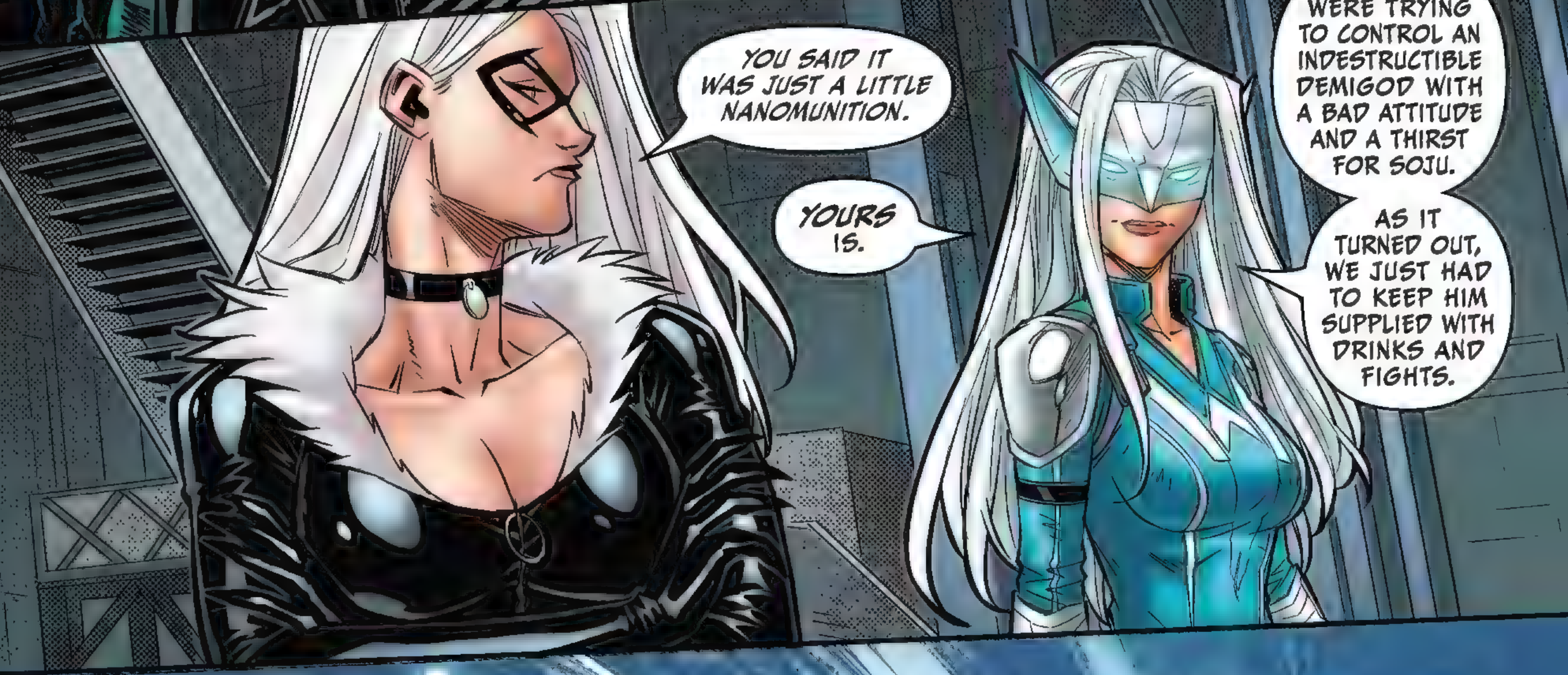




HEY, TEAM.
DO YOU GUYS
HAVE BOMBS IN
YOUR NECKS
TOO?

HA!
I DID!

BUT IT
WENT OFF WITH
JUST A LITTLE
TICKLE.



YOU SAID IT
WAS JUST A LITTLE
NANOMUNITION.

YOURS
IS.

WE
WERE TRYING
TO CONTROL AN
INDESTRUCTIBLE
DEMIGOD WITH
A BAD ATTITUDE
AND A THIRST
FOR SOJU.

AS IT
TURNED OUT,
WE JUST HAD
TO KEEP HIM
SUPPLIED WITH
DRINKS AND
FIGHTS.



SPEAKING
OF WHICH, TIGER
DIVISION...



...WE'RE
LOOKING AT THE
FIGHT OF OUR
LIVES.

WE'VE
TRACKED THE
CHOI FACTION'S
TRANSMISSIONS
TO THE ABANDONED
ALPS SKI
RESORT.

MR. ENIGMA,
GENERAL, LUNA
SNOW, AUNTIE
ANTE, AND GUN-R
WILL GO IN
HOT.

OR
COLD.

SURE.
WHILE WE EXPECT
THE FACTION TO
HAVE MEN THERE,
IT'S TAEGUKGI THAT
YOU'LL PROBABLY
HAVE TO GO UP
AGAINST.

I KNOW
TAEGUKGI IS
OUR FRIEND,
BUT HE'S UNDER
ENEMY CONTROL,
AND THAT MAKES
HIM THE MOST
DANGEROUS
MAN ON THE
PENINSULA.

HE'S
NOT THE HERO
YOU KNOW. HE
MAY VERY WELL
TRY TO KILL
YOU.

WHILE
YOU'RE PROVIDING A
DISTRACTION, BLACK CAT
AND I WILL INFILTRATE
THE RESORT, DISCERN
BY WHAT MEANS THEY'RE
CONTROLLING TAEGUKGI,
AND NEUTRALIZE
THEM.

ANY
QUESTIONS?

Hmm...

I HAVE ONE.
WHY BRING THE
FOREIGNER?

LATER.

THE WHITE FOX
SILENCED HER
WITH A GLARE.

I GET THE FEELING
THAT SHE DOESN'T LIKE
HAVING HER AUTHORITY
CHALLENGED.

BUT I WAS ASKING
THE SAME QUESTION.

WHY ME?

BUT THEN I REALLY
LOOKED AT THEIR TEAM.

SPY.

POP STAR.

WILD MAN.

ROBOT.

MERLIN.

...AND
WHATEVER
THAT
THING IS.

A PACK OF
POWERHOUSES,
FOR SURE.

BUT WE'RE
GOING UP
AGAINST
GANGSTERS
WITH A
HANKERING
FOR COUPS.

AND WHEN
YOU'RE
GOING UP
AGAINST
CROOKS...

...YOU WANT
SOMEONE WHO
CAN THINK LIKE
A CROOK.

BECAUSE
THEY ARE
ONE.

AND WHEN THAT
CROOK LANDS ON
YOUR DOORSTEP?

WELL.

WE'RE UP.
READY?

BORN
READY.

A WALK
THROUGH
THE CHERRY
BLOSSOMS,
LADIES?

NEAREST I CAN
GET YOU IS THE
OUTSKIRTS OF
THE RESORT.

THAT WILL
BE FINE.

IT'S YOUR
LUCKY DAY,
THEN.



WHAAAT-?!

WELL, THAT
SURE BEATS A
PARACHUTE.

QUIET.

YOU TAKE
ME TO THE
NICEST PLACES,
WHITEY.

THAT'S NOT
A VERY GOOD
NICKNAME.

YOU
CAN'T
CALL ME
FOX?

THERE'S
A LOT OF
BAGGAGE THERE
YOU DON'T WANT
TO GET INTO.



IT'S LAUGHABLY
EASY, BREAKING IN.



I THOUGHT
THE GUARDS
MUST HAVE
BEEN ASLEEP.

AT FIRST.



OR JUST
INCOMPETENT.



AT FIRST.

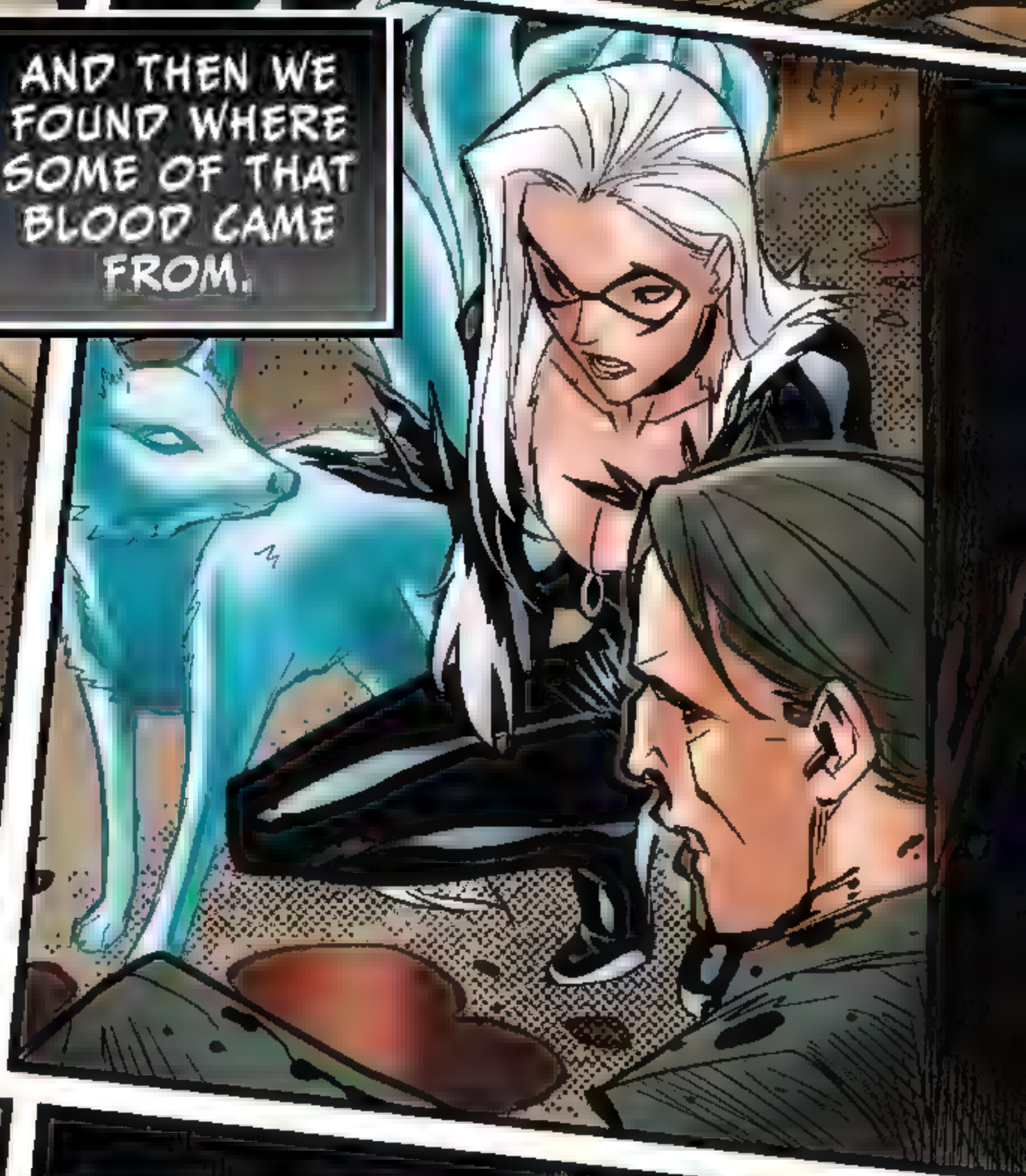


BUT THEN WE
FOUND ALL
THE BLOOD.



THAT
BROKEN-NOSE,
HOT-PENNY SMELL
EVERYWHERE.

AND THEN WE
FOUND WHERE
SOME OF THAT
BLOOD CAME
FROM.



THAT
SLAUGHTERHOUSE
STINK. ALL OVER.



LIKE IT HAD
SOAKED INTO
THE VERY
STRUCTURE OF
THE RESORT.



IT WASN'T HARD
TO TRACK TO
ITS SOURCE.

Errr...

WHEN DID THIS GO FROM A SPY MOVIE TO A SLASHER FLICK?

SHUT UP. SOMETHING'S WRONG.

BECAUSE I AM WAY TOO PROMISCUOUS TO SURVIVE A SLASHER MOVIE-- JUST SAYING.

NONE OF THIS MAKES SENSE.

THESE ARE ALL CHOI FACTION GANGSTERS. I'M GETTING A HIT ON FACIAL RECOGNITION OFF EACH OF THEM.

MR. CHOI IS HERE. THE BOSS.

WHAT HAPPENED? DID SOMEONE HIT THEM BEFORE US?

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT...

...BUT I'D
BET THE REST
OF THE TEAM
HAS RUN INTO
YOUR BOY.

KOOM!!

DID...

DID WE
STOP HIM?
WAS IT THAT
EASY?

NO.

STAY
SHARP,
GIRL.

...OAAAAHHH...

NO
NEED TO
WORRY.

YOU DIDN'T
SCRATCH ME.
THIS BODY
IS VERY
RESILIENT.

MR. CHOI WANTED
ME TO HELP HIM WITH
HIS RIDICULOUS COUP AND
PUT ME IN COMMAND OF
THIS MAGNIFICENT
BODY.

BUT WITH
THIS POWER AT
MY COMMAND...
I DON'T HAVE
TO LISTEN TO
ANYONE.



SO COME
ON, THEN.

THEY DON'T
STAND A CHANCE,
DO THEY?

NO.
THAT'S
WHY WE NEED TO
END THINGS HERE,
BEFORE THEY GET
TAKEN APART BY AN
ANGRY GOD.



I JUST DON'T
UNDERSTAND.

TAEГУKGI
IS UNDER
SOMEONE'S
CONTROL,
BUT ALL THE
ENEMIES ARE
DEAD.

WE NEED
TO FIND WHO'S
IN CONTROL.
FOLLOW THE
LIGHTS.

YOU
WANT MY
THEORY?

IT'S WHAT
I BROUGHT
YOU ALONG FOR.
IT'S NOT AS IF
NANOMUNITION
IMPLANTS ARE
CHEAP.



HAR,
HAR.

I THINK
YOUR CHOI
FACTION FIGURED
OUT HOW TO
MIND-CONTROL
TAEГУKGI.

BUT
THIS NEW
TAEГУKGI,
WHOEVER
HE IS--

--I
DON'T THINK
HE WANTS TO
PLAY BALL.

AFTER ALL,
HAVEN'T YOU
EVER WANTED TO
MURDER YOUR
BOSS?



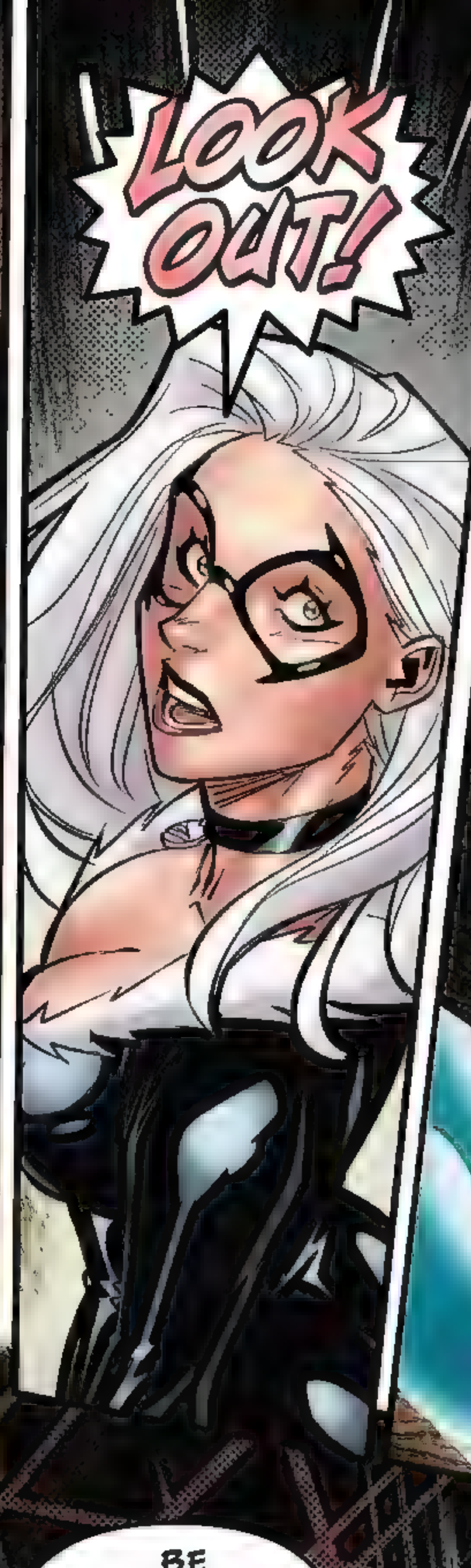
OF
COURSE.

I WORK FOR THE
GOVERNMENT,
AFTER ALL.





NO WAY,
WAS THAT A
JOKE--?!



LOOK
OUT!



Uhf!

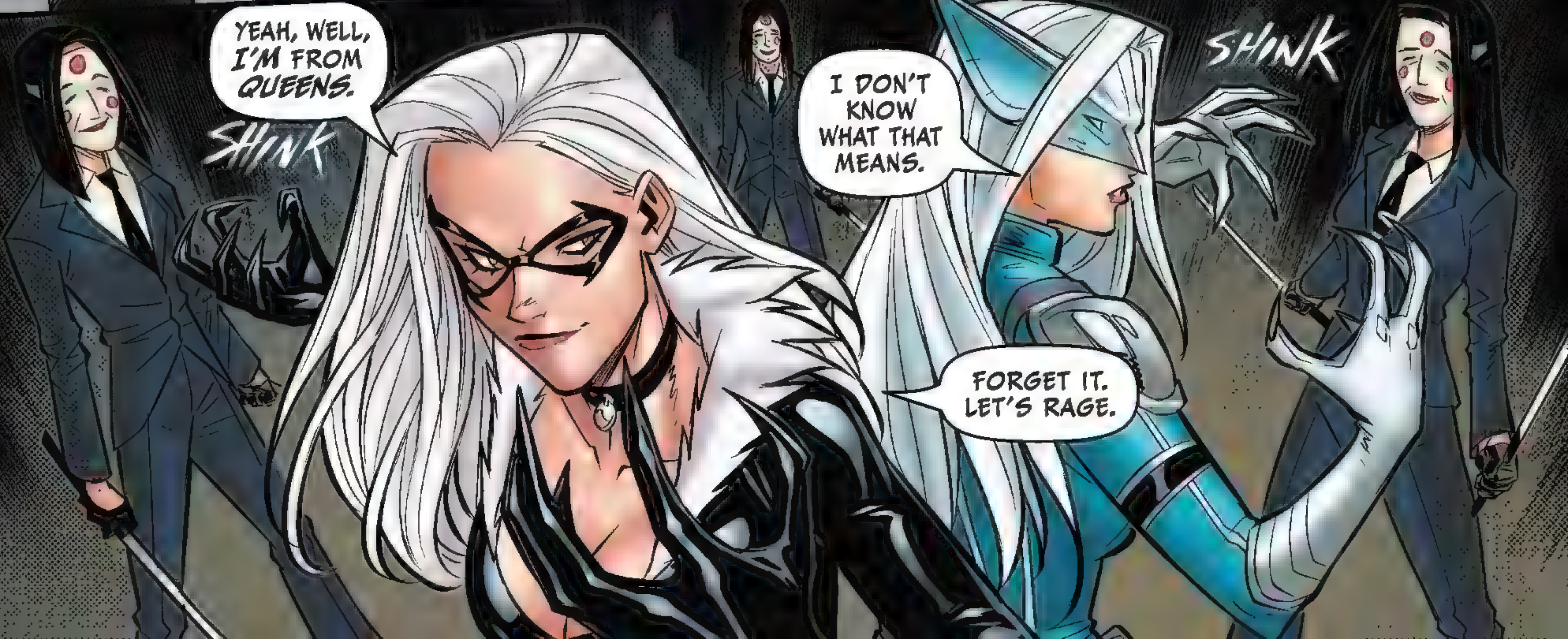


YOU KNOW
WHAT? ON *SECOND*
THOUGHT, GO AHEAD
AND THROW ME IN
JAIL FOR ILLEGAL
ENTRY.

BE
CAREFUL. THE
KNIFE WOUNDS
ON THE DEAD
GANGSTERS--IT
MATCHES.

THESE ARE
MAIDENS--
A MERCENARY
DEATH CULT
FROM DAEGU.

I'M JUST
ABOUT DONE
WITH THIS.

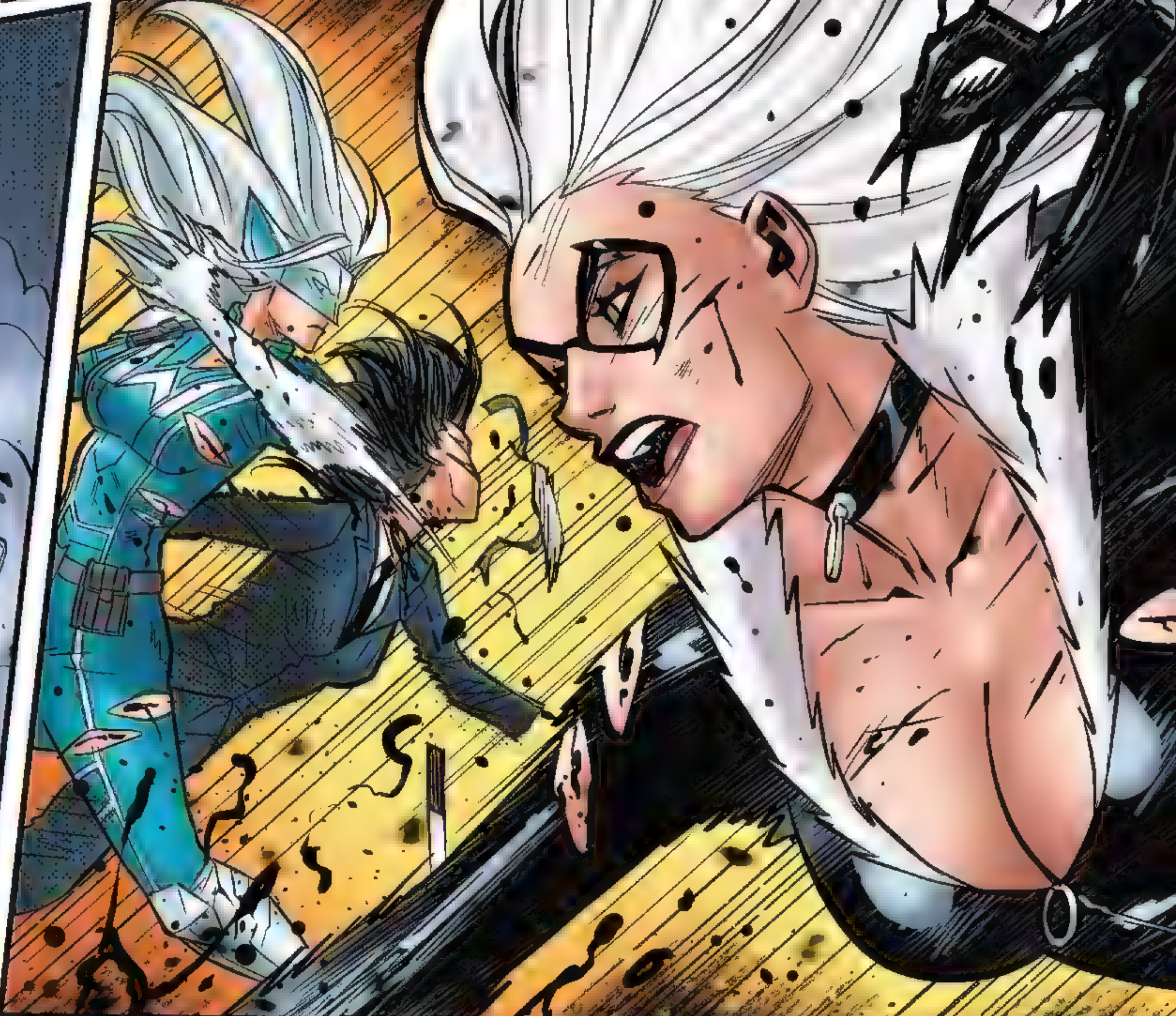
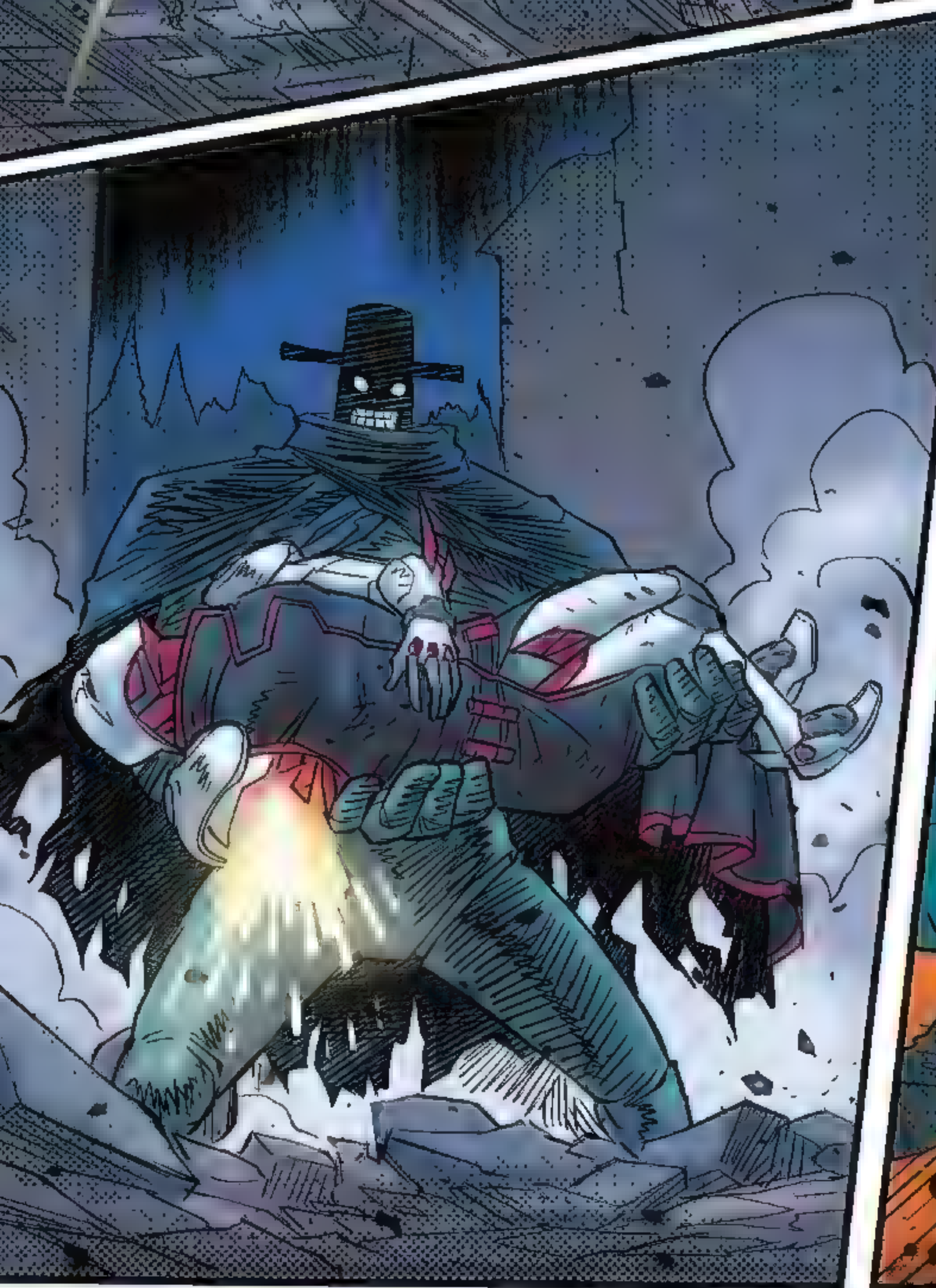


YEAH, WELL,
I'M FROM
QUEENS.

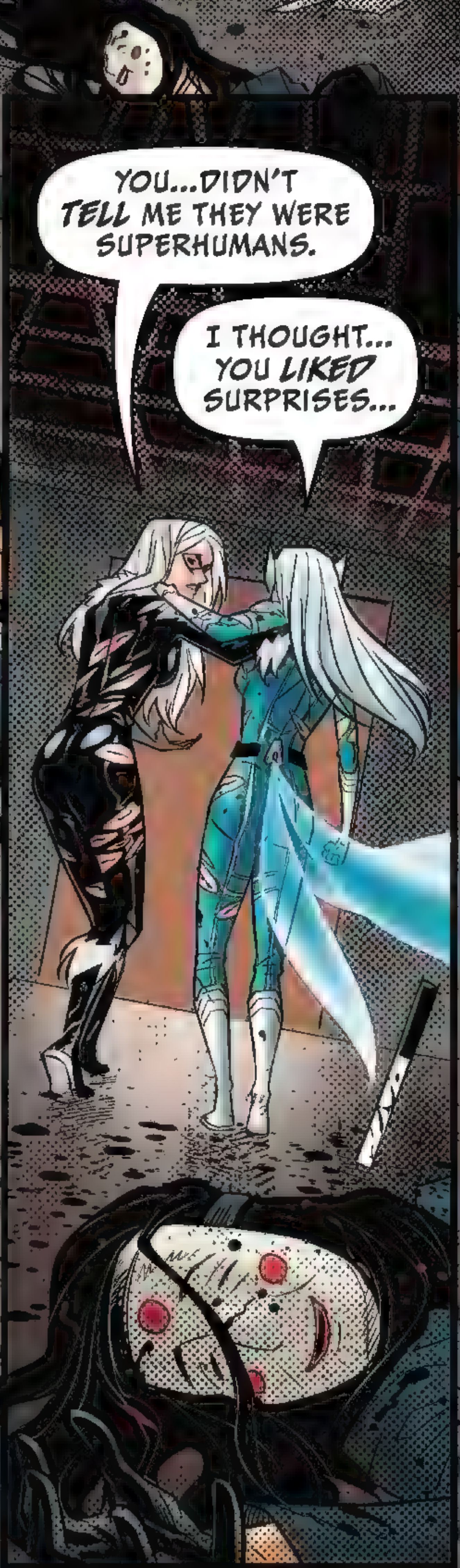
I DON'T
KNOW
WHAT THAT
MEANS.

FORGET IT.
LET'S RAGE.

SHINK

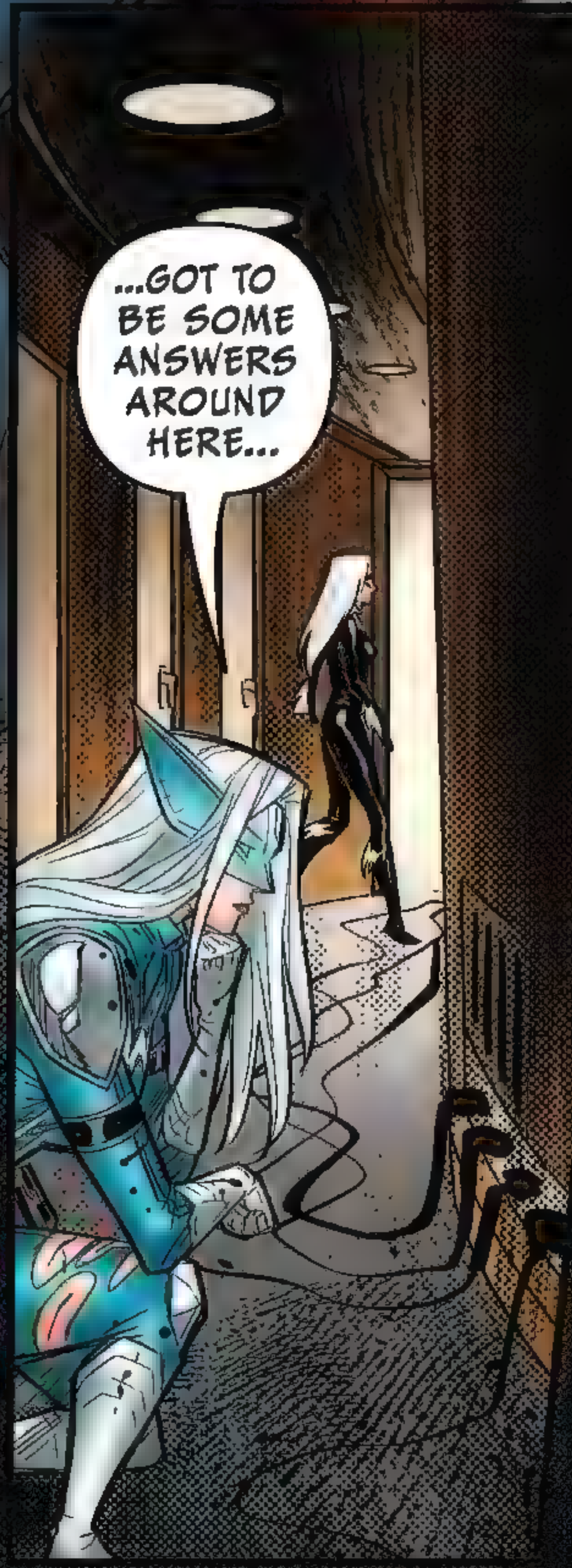




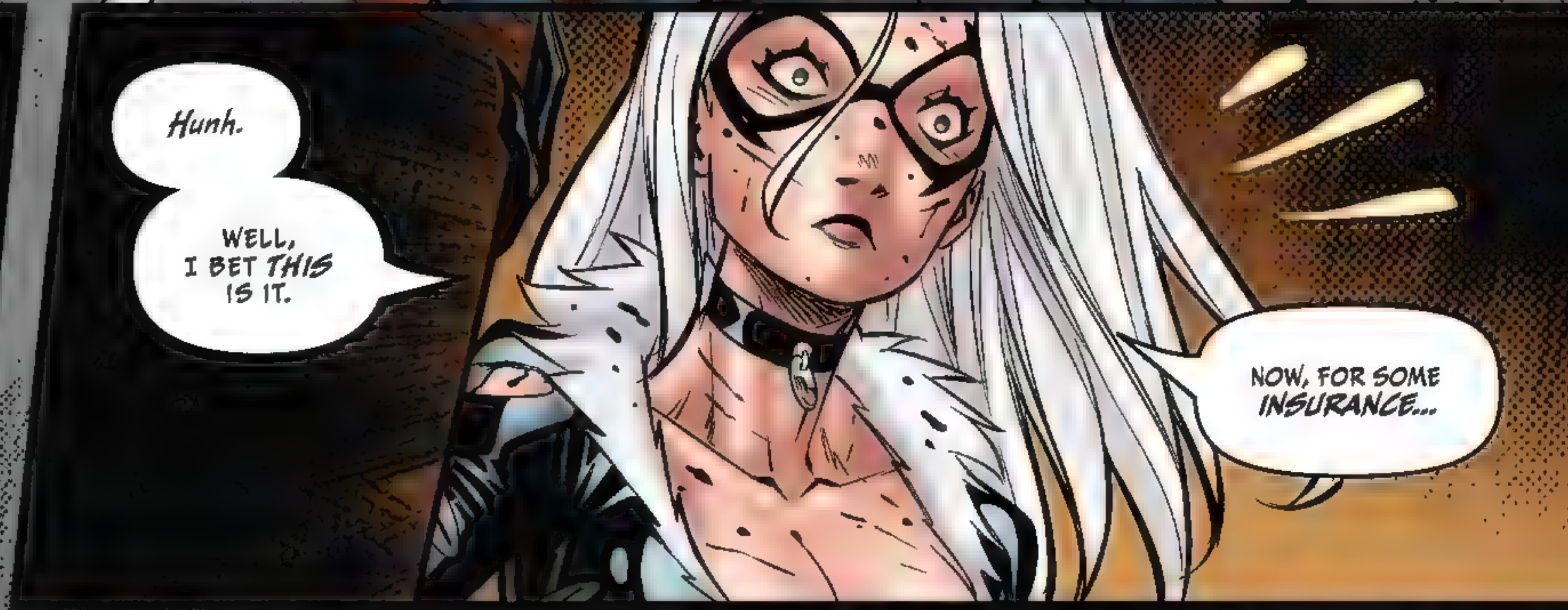


YOU...DIDN'T
TELL ME THEY WERE
SUPERHUMANS.

I THOUGHT...
YOU LIKED
SURPRISES...



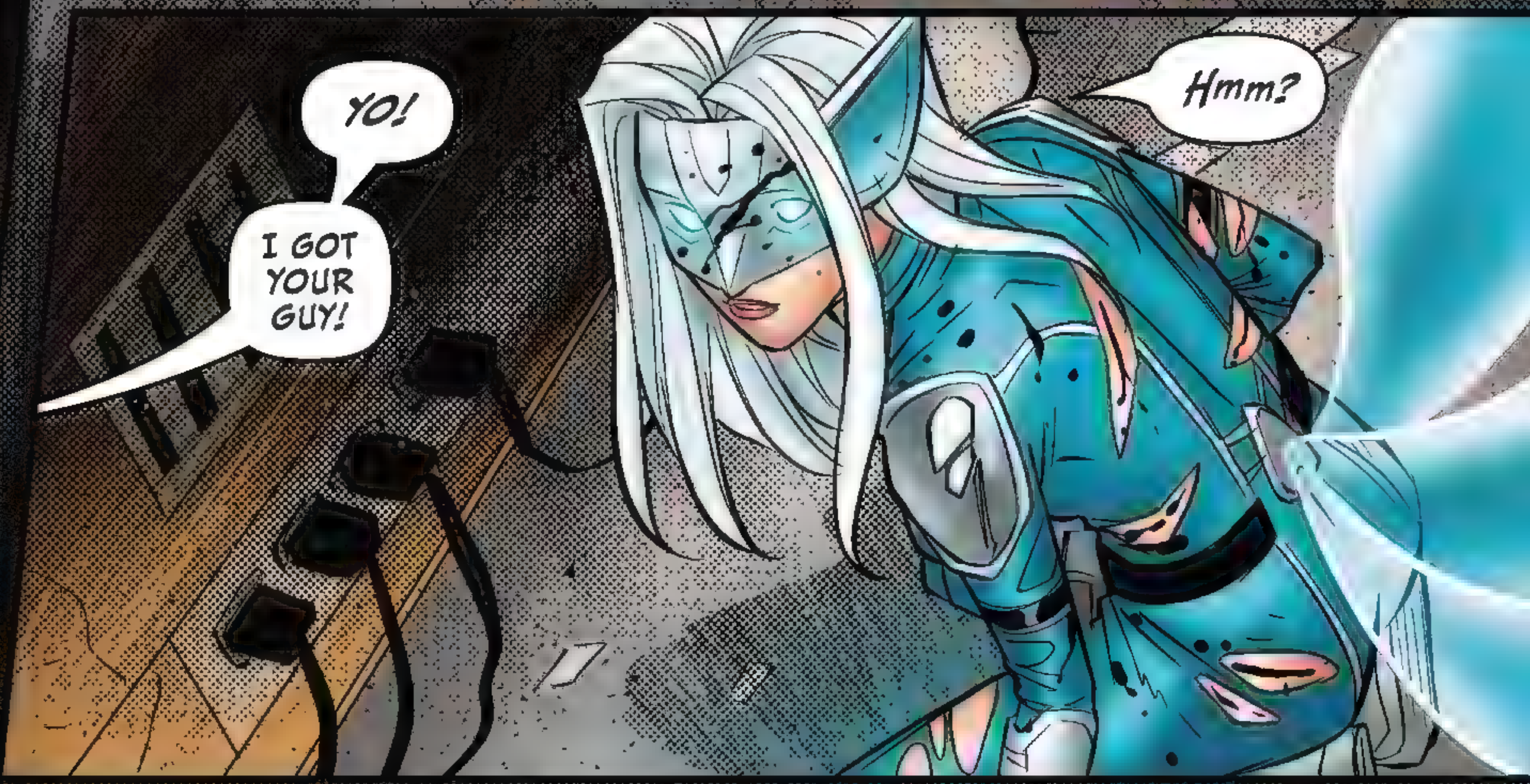
...GOT TO
BE SOME
ANSWERS
AROUND
HERE...



Hunh.

WELL,
I BET THIS
IS IT.

NOW, FOR SOME
INSURANCE...



YO!

I GOT
YOUR
GUY!

Hmm?



MONGDAL!

BUT HE'S
SUPPOSED
TO BE
DEAD...

THIS IS YOUR BIG
VILLAIN? HE'S KIND OF...
UNDERWHELMING?

HE'S A
PSYCHIC CUCKOO,
A BODY THIEF.

HE CAN
PROJECT HIS
CONSCIOUSNESS
OUT AND POSSESS
THE BODY OF
ANOTHER.

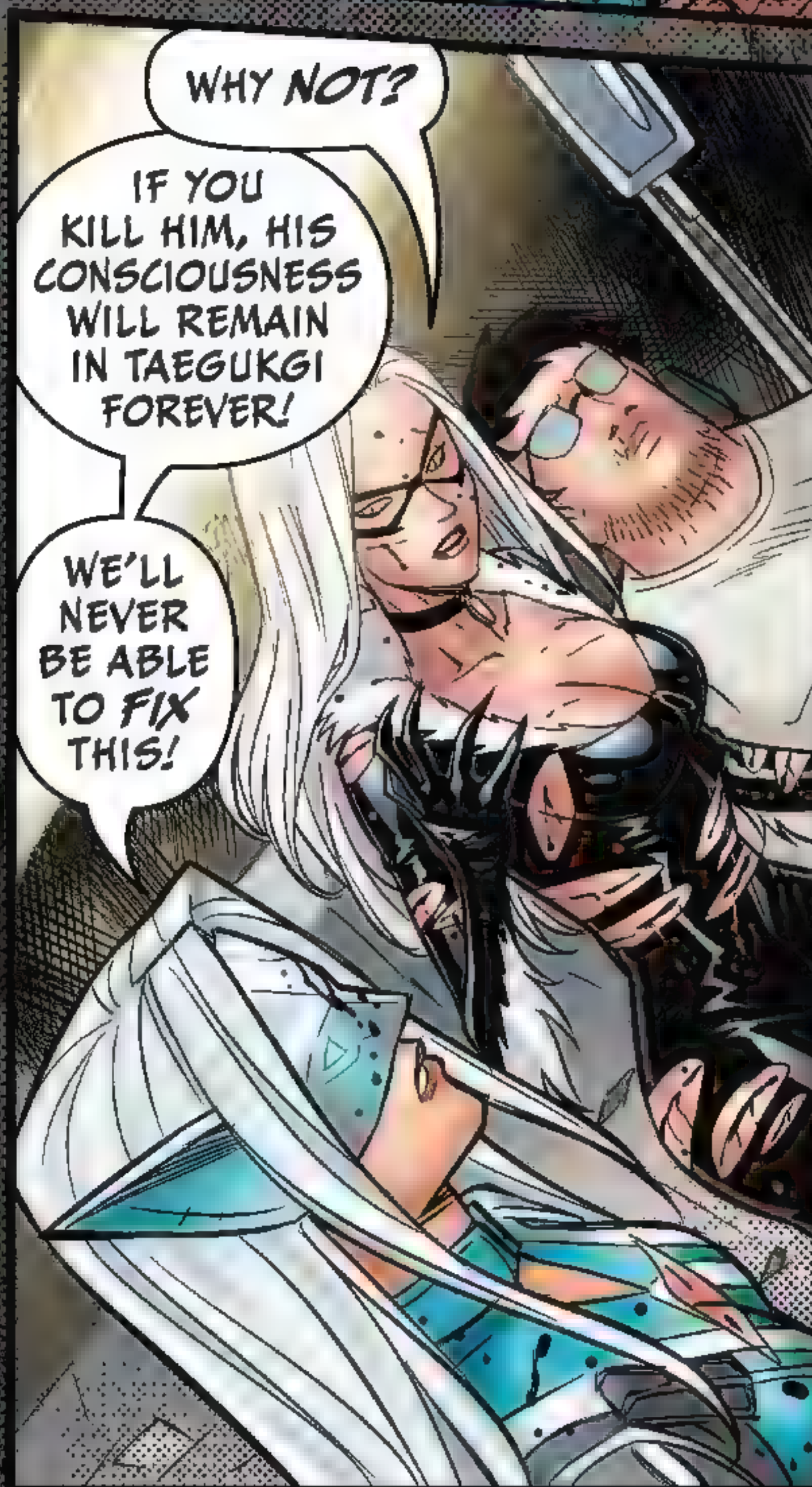
BUT HE'S
NEVER BEEN
POWERFUL ENOUGH
TO TAKE OVER
TAEGUKGI...



WHATEVER.

NO!

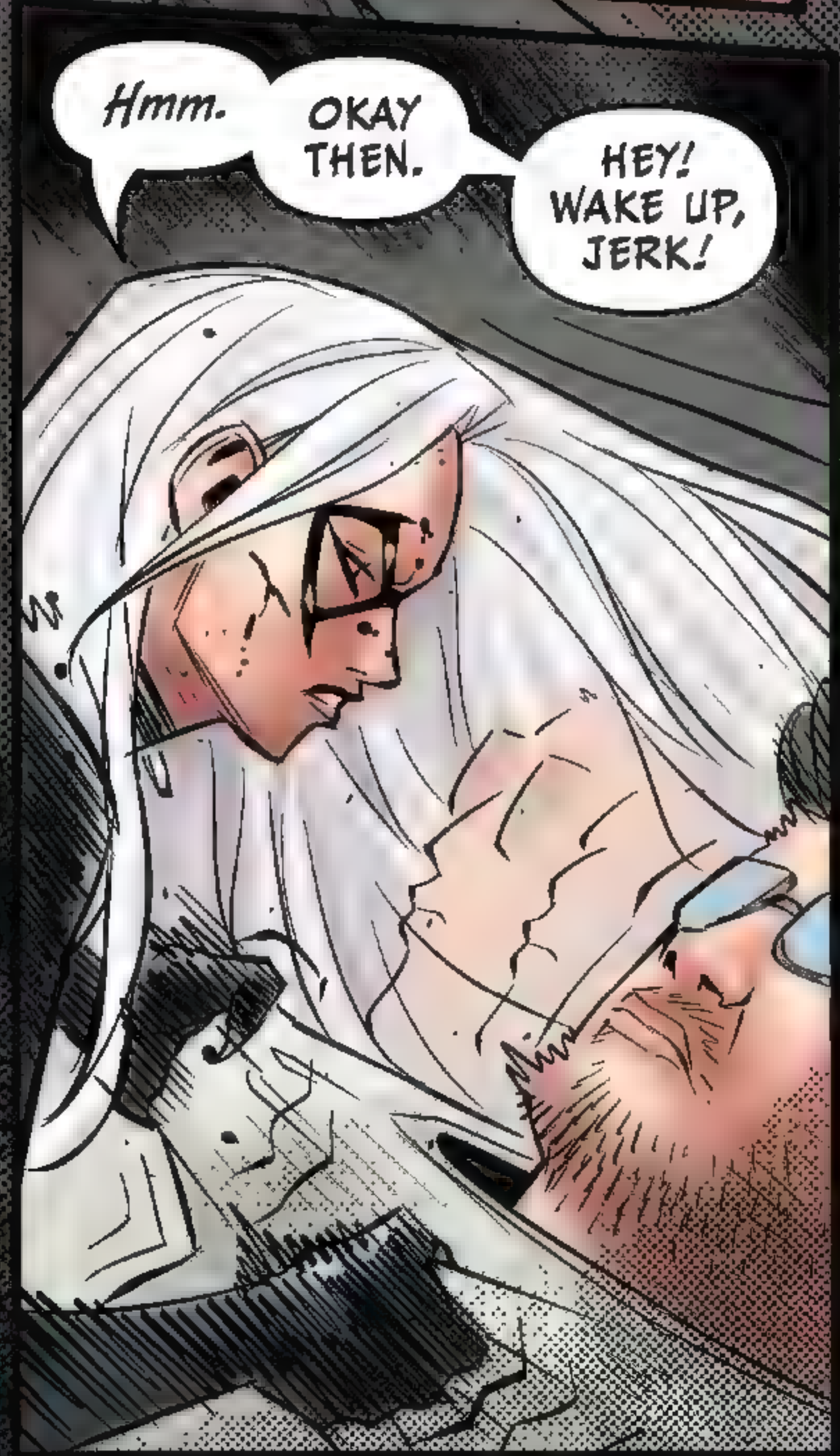
DON'T
KILL HIM!



WHY NOT?

IF YOU
KILL HIM, HIS
CONSCIOUSNESS
WILL REMAIN
IN TAEGUKGI
FOREVER!

WE'LL
NEVER
BE ABLE
TO FIX
THIS!



Hmm.

OKAY
THEN.

HEY!
WAKE UP,
JERK!



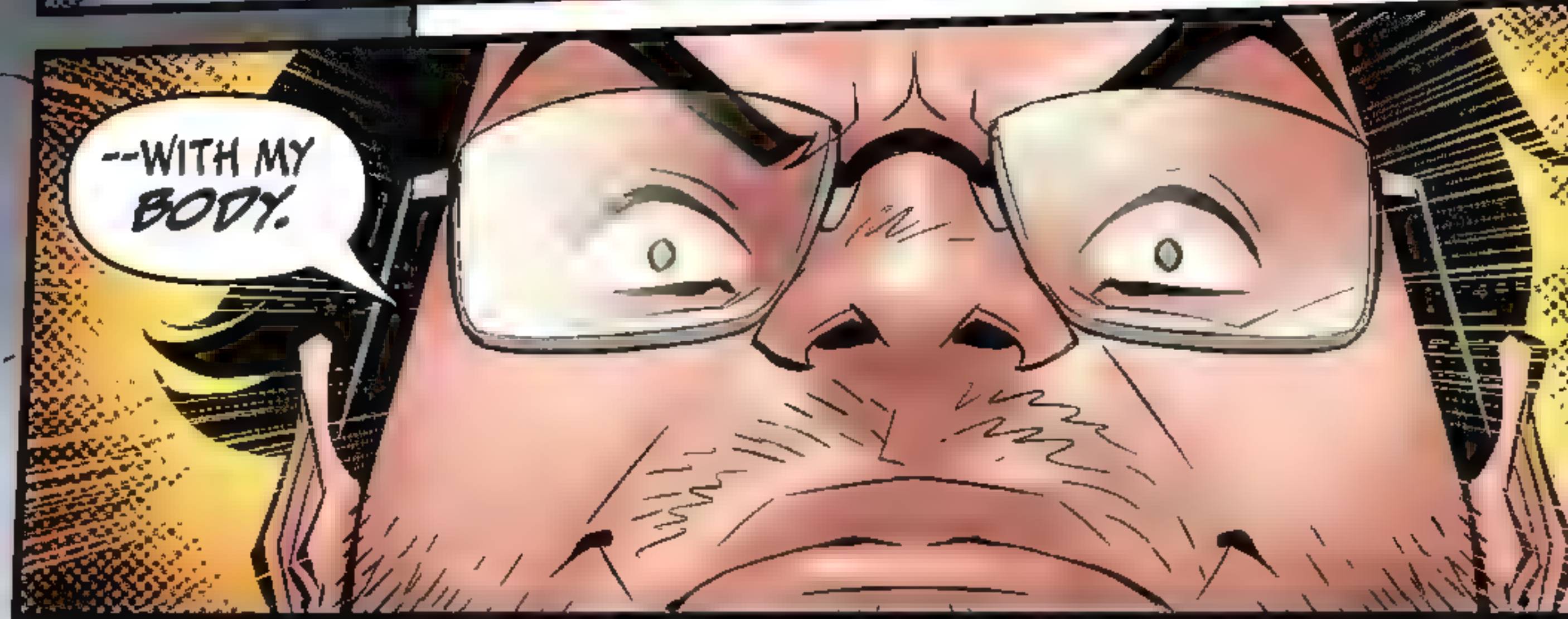
THE
FAMOUS TIGER
DIVISION.

BROKEN
BENEATH MY
FEET.



Hmm?

SOMEONE IS
INTERFERING--



--WITH MY
BODY.



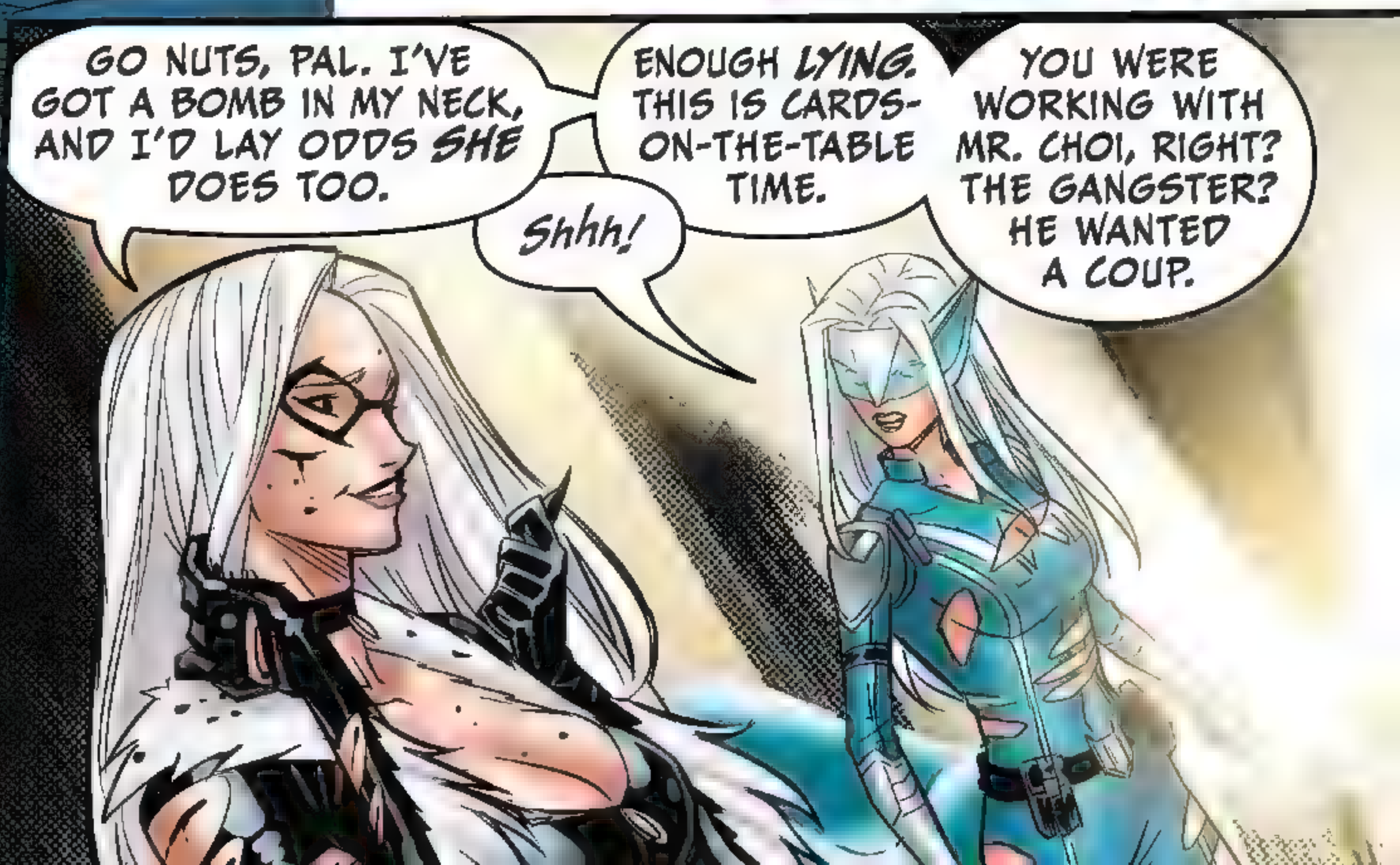
WHITE FOX. I **THOUGHT**
I MISSED YOU BACK THERE.
AND YOU HAVE A FOREIGN
FRIEND AS WELL!

WHERE IS
TAEGUKGI?

WITH WHAT'S
LEFT OF THE REST
OF YOUR TEAM.
YOU KNOW HOW
MY...VISITATIONS
LEAVE THE HOST
UNCONSCIOUS
AFTERWARD.

BUT STAY
WHERE YOU
ARE. IF YOU
TAKE ONE STEP
TOWARD ME,
I WILL RETREAT
TO TAEGUKGI'S
BODY.

OR
PERHAPS
I WILL TAKE
ONE OF
YOURS...



GO NUTS, PAL. I'VE
GOT A BOMB IN MY NECK,
AND I'D LAY ODDS **SHE**
DOES TOO.

ENOUGH LYING.
THIS IS CARDS-
ON-THE-TABLE
TIME.

YOU WERE
WORKING WITH
MR. CHOI, RIGHT?
THE GANGSTER?
HE WANTED
A COUP.

Shhh!

OF COURSE.

HE WAS COOKING UP THIS LITTLE SCHEME, THIS COUP, FOR A LONG TIME. HE FAKED MY DEATH, SUPPLIED ME WITH THE DRUGS TO INCREASE MY POWER.

BUT WHEN I WAS IN TAEGUKGI'S BODY... IT WAS AN EXPERIENCE LIKE YOU COULDN'T BELIEVE. THE POWER...

BUT YOU PLANNED TO BETRAY HIM ALL ALONG, DIDN'T YOU. THAT'S WHY YOU HIRED THE CREEPY GHOST-LADIES TO BACK YOU UP, TO KILL ALL THE CHOI FACTION BOYS.

OF COURSE. I HAVE NO INTEREST IN POLITICS, OR LEADERSHIP.

I CARE ONLY FOR POWER, AND THE ABUSE OF IT. I HAVE NO DESIRE TO TURN THIS COUNTRY INTO A DICTATORSHIP.

NO, WITH TAEGUKGI'S POWER, I THINK I SHALL MAKE OF IT A LIVING HELL.

I'M SURE *SOMEONE* WILL STOP ME...BUT HOW MANY WILL I KILL BEFORE THEN? AND EVEN THEN, TAEGUKGI WILL BE FOREVER RUINED.

FOR A GOOD MAN TO BE FORCED TO BE A PASSENGER IN HIS OWN BODY...

...WHILE IT IS MADE TO COMMIT SUCH ATROCITIES?

I REALLY MUST THANK YOU.

BEATING TIGER DIVISION INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS WAS A DELIGHT, BUT I FORGOT TO LEAVE ANYONE TO GLOAT OVER.

YOUR PRESENCE HERE HAS HELPED TO CORRECT THAT OVERSIGHT.

NOW.

I THINK YOU'RE LYING. ABOUT THE BOMBS. PERHAPS I SHALL TAKE THE FOREIGNER'S BODY FOR A SPELL.

MAKE YOU KILL YOUR PRETTY FRIEND, OR BE KILLED BY HER. WOULDN'T THAT BE DELICIOUS, WHITE FOX?



FIGHT HIM.
FIGHT HIM WITH
EVERYTHING
YOU HAVE.

I DON'T WANT
TO BLOW YOUR
NANOMUNITION.

SEE,
MONGDAL,
THE WHITE
FOX? SHE'S A
SUPER-SPY.
SHE LIES
ALL THE
TIME.

BECAUSE
WE'RE
FRIENDS? SAY
THAT WE'RE
FRIENDS.

BE SERIOUS
FOR ONCE IN
YOUR LIFE!

NEVER
MIND, YOU'D
PROBABLY
JUST LIE.

BUT
I WASN'T
LYING ABOUT
THE NECK
BOMBS.

I'VE GOT ONE.
SHE'S PROBABLY
GOT ONE. AND WHILE
YOU WERE SLEEPING,
BEFORE SHE GOT
HERE--

--WELL,
I DIDN'T
WANT YOU TO
FEEL LEFT
OUT.

HOW DID
YOU--?

HOW?
I'M ME.

YOU
DIDN'T--

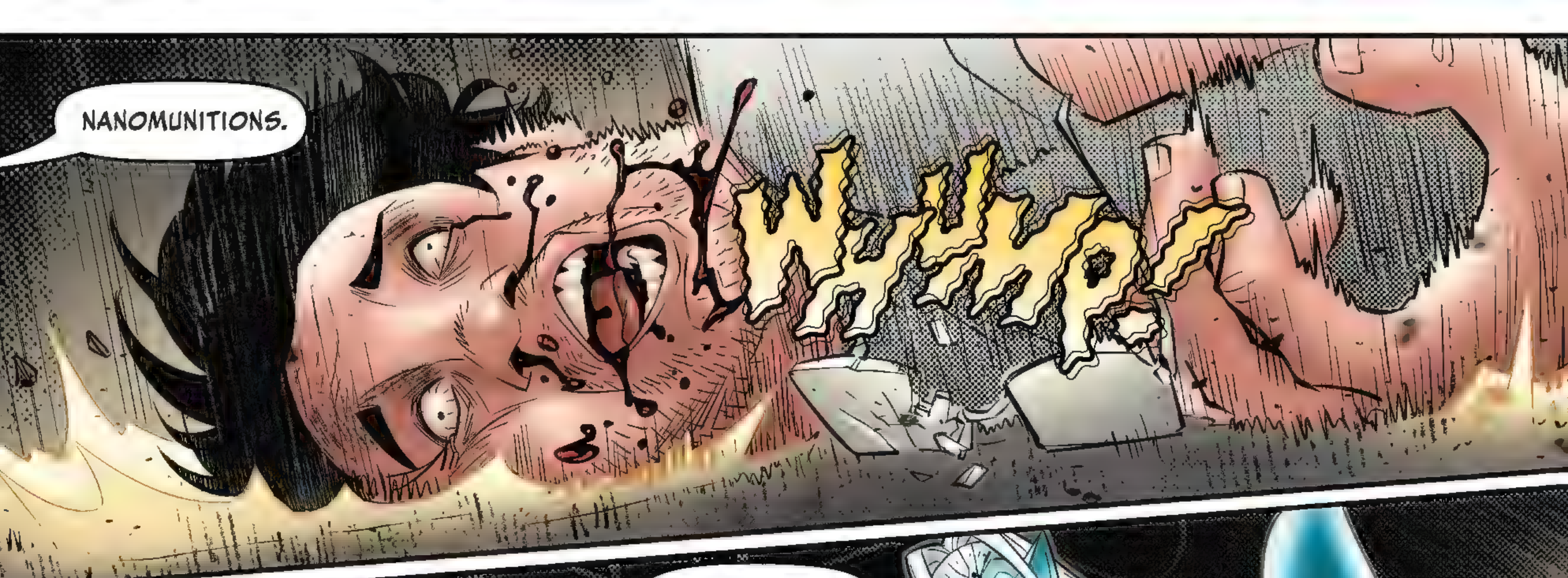
I DID.

CLICK!

POW.

FWOMP

GRAGHKK...!



NANOMUNITIONS.

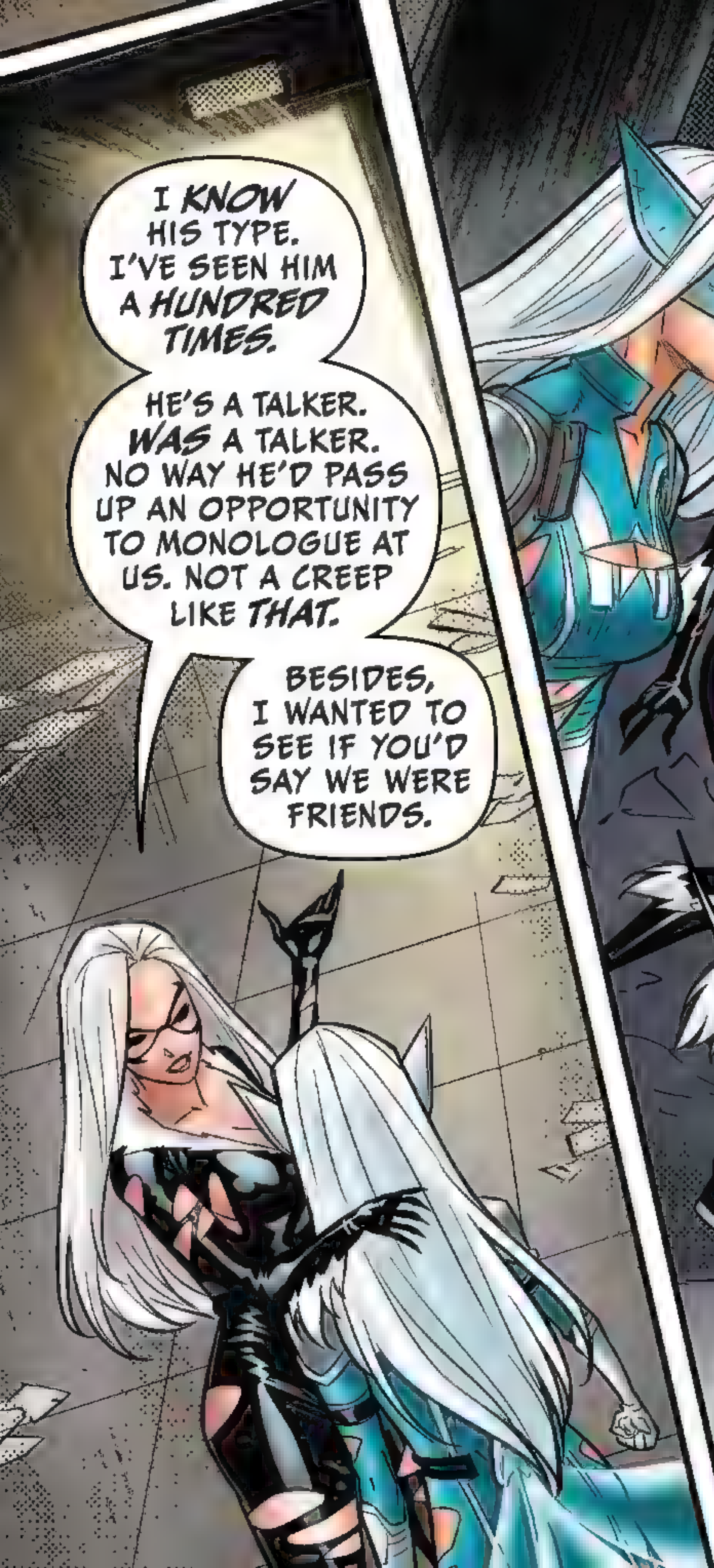


I'M BEGINNING
TO SEE WHY YOU
LIKE THEM.

WHY--

WHY DIDN'T
YOU KILL HIM
IMMEDIATELY?!

RELAX.
THAT'S WHY
YOU BROUGHT
ME, RIGHT?



I KNOW
HIS TYPE.
I'VE SEEN HIM
A HUNDRED
TIMES.

HE'S A TALKER.
WAS A TALKER.
NO WAY HE'D PASS
UP AN OPPORTUNITY
TO MONOLOGUE AT
US. NOT A CREEP
LIKE THAT.

BESIDES,
I WANTED TO
SEE IF YOU'D
SAY WE WERE
FRIENDS.



ANYWAYS,
CAN I GET BACK
TO MY VACATION
NOW?

YOU
KNOW...

I REALLY
WISH YOU
WOULD.



CONSIDER
THE CAT.





IT'S BEEN TWO MONTHS SINCE--

--SINCE I DID WHAT I DID TO THE BLACK FOX.



HOW I FEEL ABOUT THAT? WELL...



HOW I'VE BEEN DEALING WITH THOSE FEELINGS?

WELL...



BUT THE THE THING ABOUT THE CAT...



...SHE ALWAYS
LANDS ON
HER FEET.

WHUMP!



AND
BESIDES...



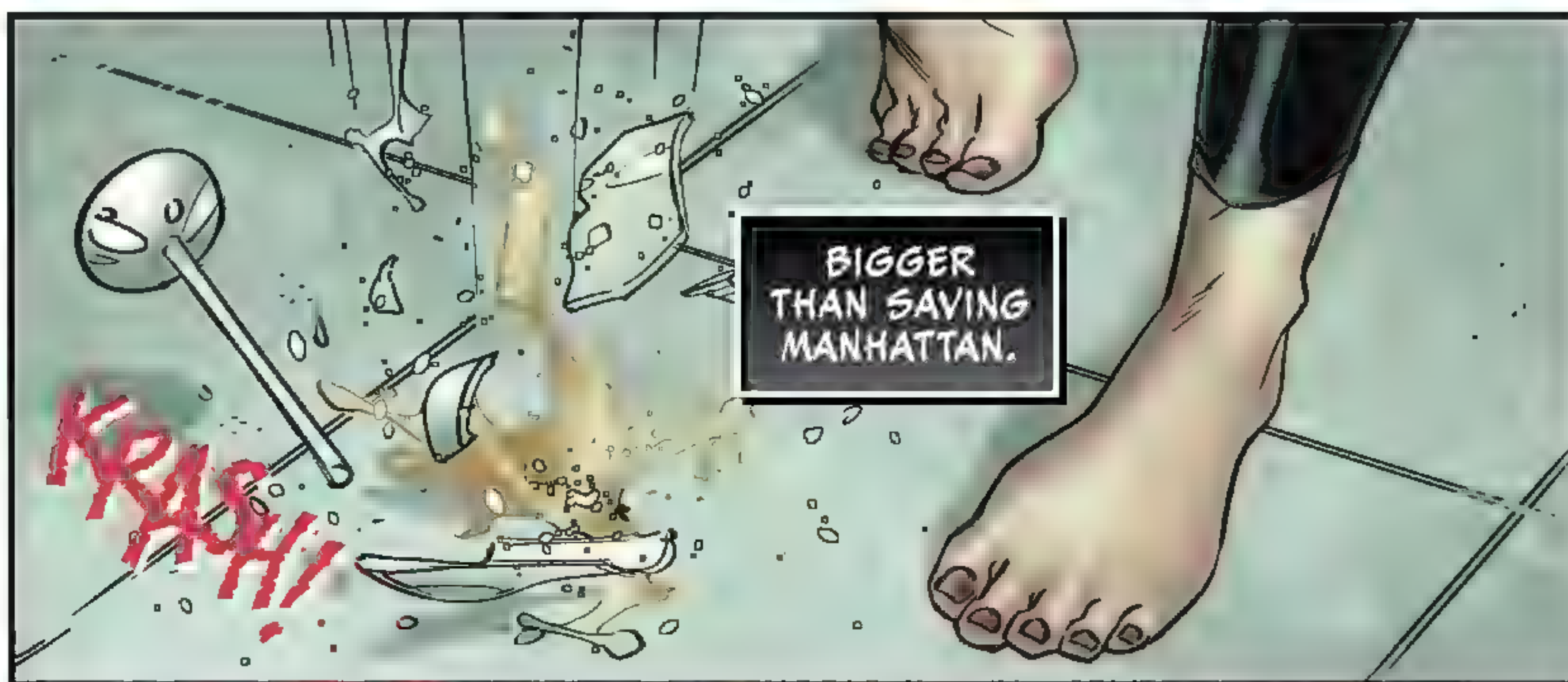
I DON'T HAVE THE LUXURY
OF FEELINGS RIGHT NOW.

NOT WHEN
I'M WORKING
ON THE
BIGGEST
JOB OF MY
CAREER.



THERE
WE ARE.

BIGGER THAN CRACKING
THE THIEVES GUILD'S VAULTS.



BIGGER
THAN SAVING
MANHATTAN.

KRASH!!

BIG.

FLURCH!

AND
I'VE GOT
ONE SHOT
AT IT.

CHIK!

BRUNO, YOU
RECEIVING?

FIVE
BY FIVE,
BOSS.

DOL, YOU IN
POSITION?

IN
POSITION.

IN STINKING,
FETID,
POSITION.

THEN LET'S
GET ON THE
GOOD FOOT,
BABY.

HIT IT.

KRSH!



"AND ERE A MAN
HATH POWER TO SAY
'BEHOLD!' THE JAWS
OF DARKNESS DO
DEVOUR IT UP.

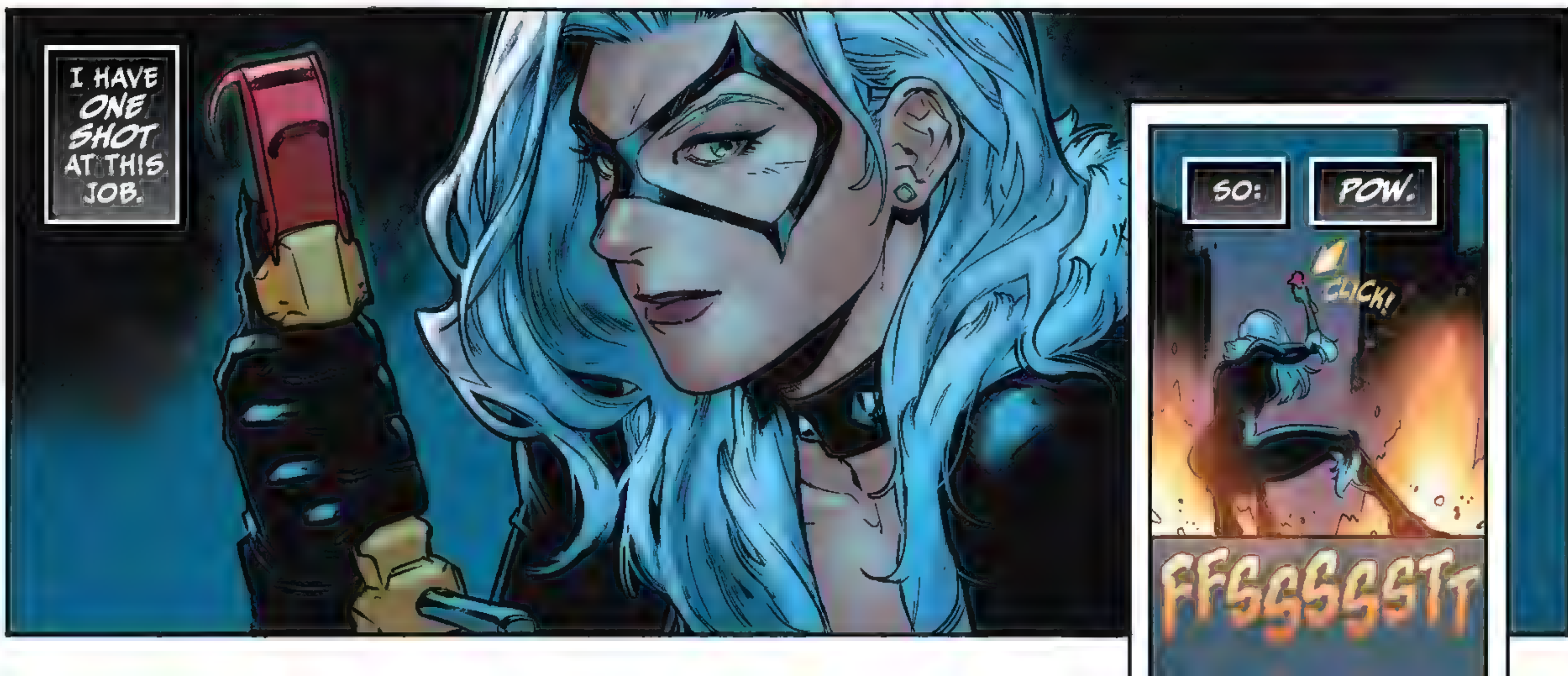
"SO
QUICK BRIGHT
THINGS COME TO
CONFUSION."

HeHEHEhe!

AND WITH
ONE PRESS OF
A BUTTON...



...EVERY CON ED
ACCOUNT FOR A HALF
MILE AROUND IS HIT
WITH A CUTOFF SIGNAL
CLAIMING SIX MONTHS
OF UNPAID BILLS, AND
DARKNESS REIGNS.



I HAVE
ONE
SHOT
AT THIS
JOB.

SO:

POW.



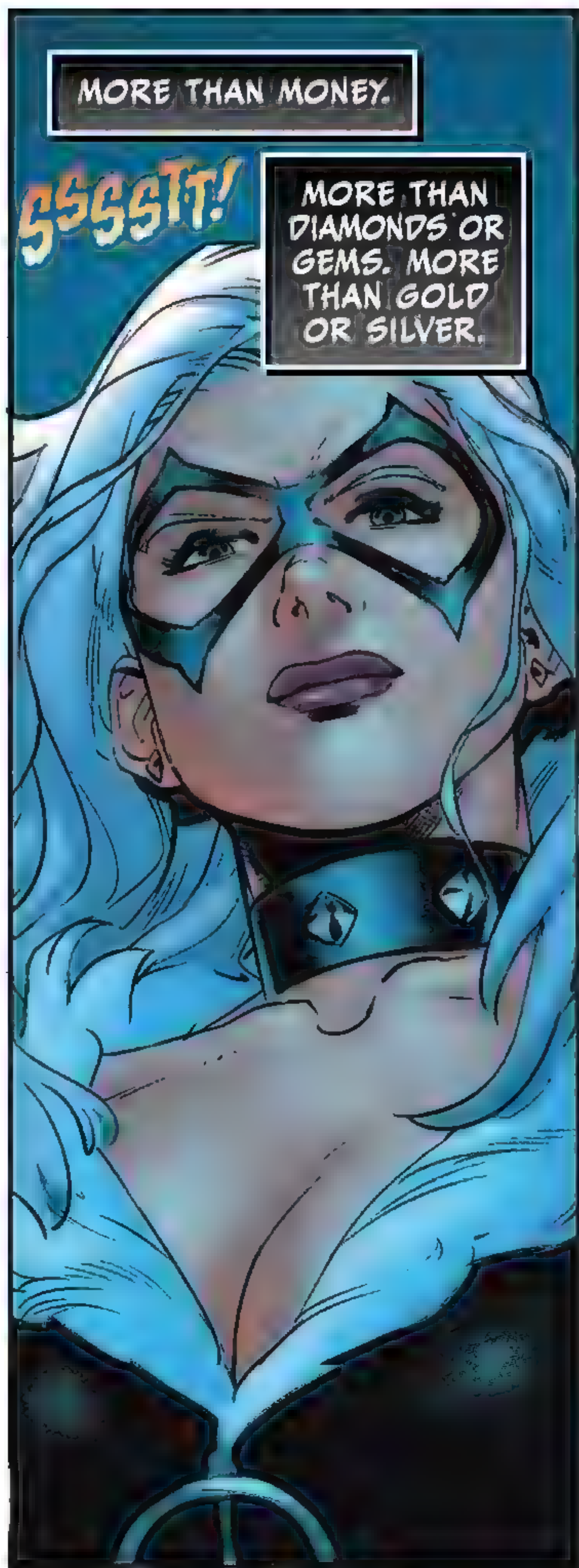
FFGGGGSTT



I NEED TO GET
IT RIGHT.

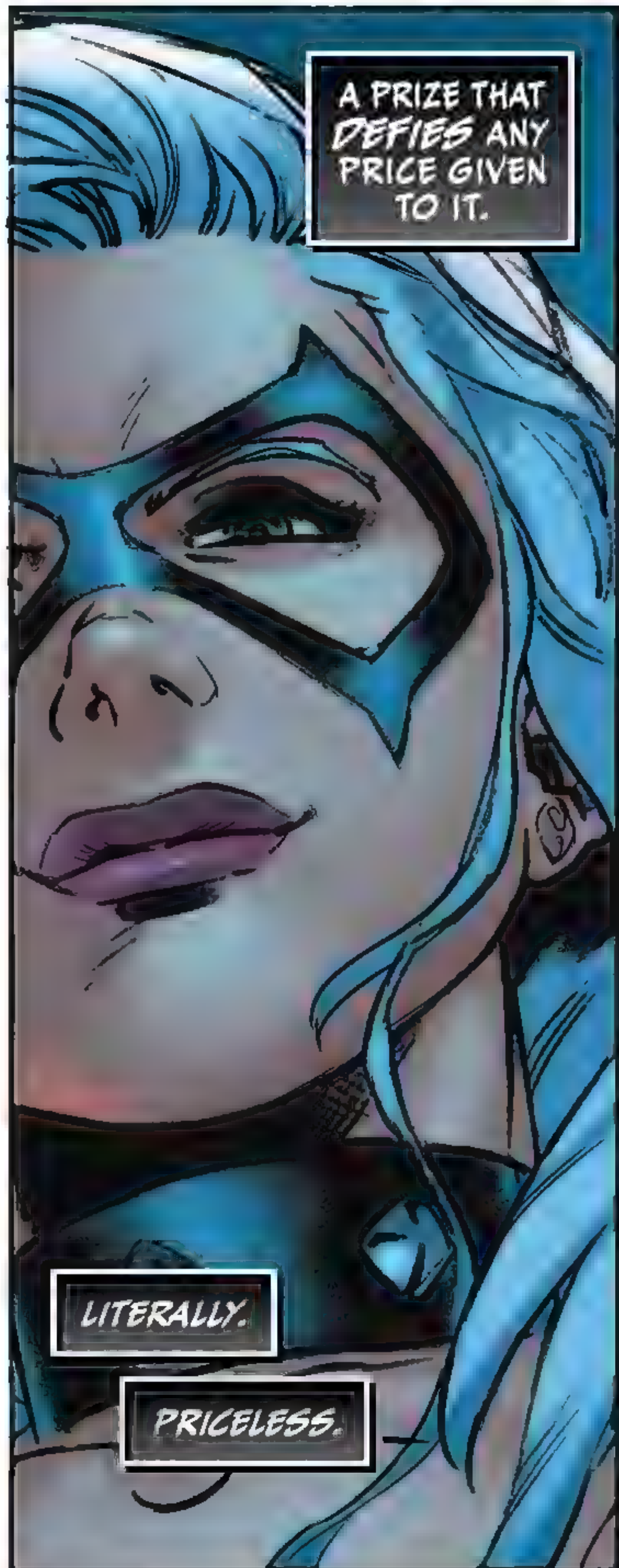
BECAUSE THE
REWARDS...

FFSSSSST!
SSSSST!



MORE THAN MONEY.

MORE THAN
DIAMONDS OR
GEMS. MORE
THAN GOLD
OR SILVER.



A PRIZE THAT
DEFIES ANY
PRICE GIVEN
TO IT.

LITERALLY.

PRICELESS.

NOW, A
WAREHOUSE
ON THE DOCKS
ISN'T EXACTLY
THE HEIGHT
OF A SECURE
LOCATION.



BUT IT DOESN'T
HAVE TO BE.
BECAUSE IT HAS
WHAT 4 YANCY
STREET, AVENGERS
MOUNTAIN, ETC.,
DON'T HAVE.

ANONYMITY.

SECRECY.

YOU CAN'T
ROB A
PLACE IF
YOU DON'T
KNOW IT
EXISTS.

BUT THE PROBLEM
WITH *SECRECY*
IS THAT IT'S LIKE
A *DIAMOND*.

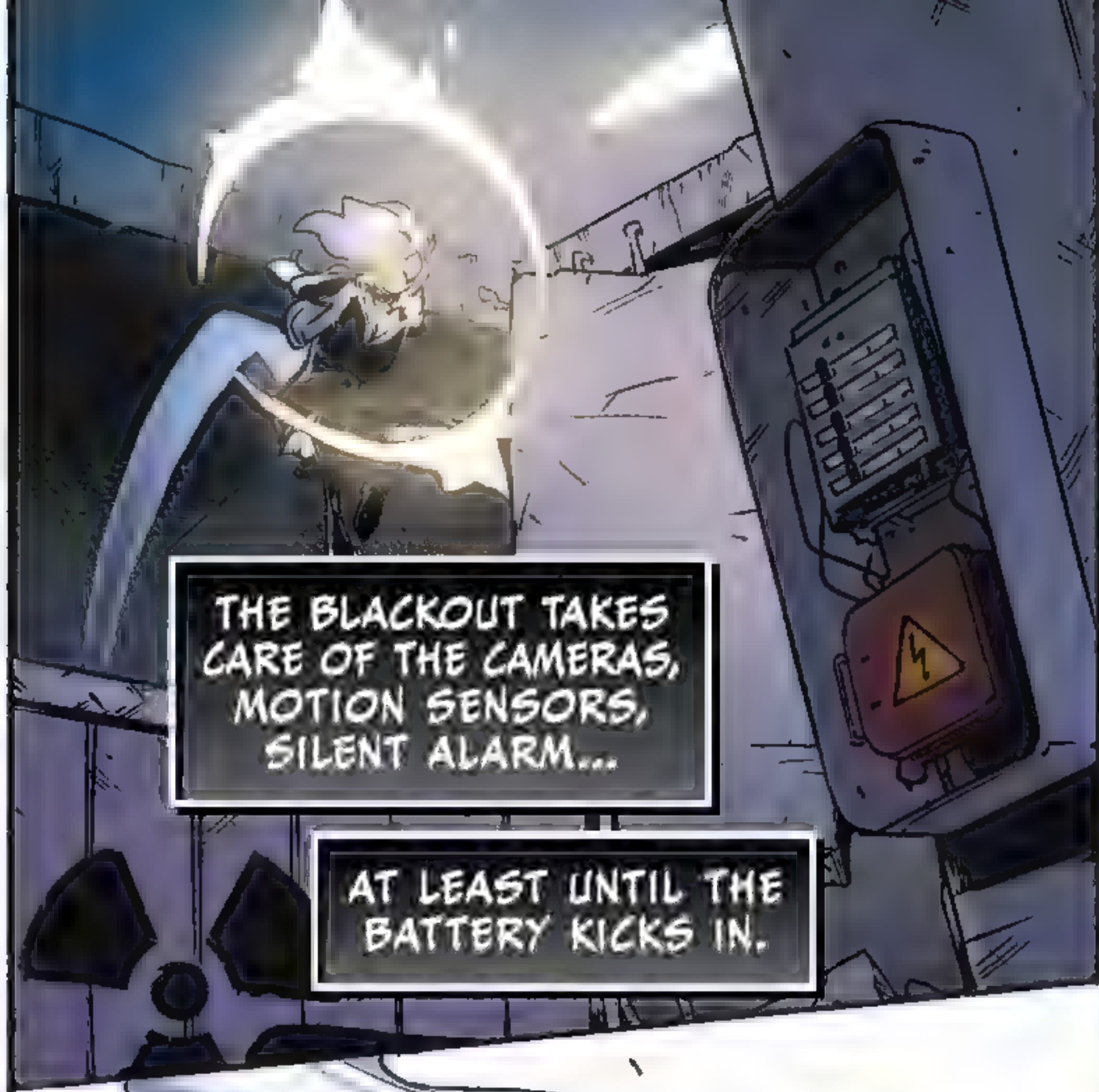
IT'S HARD.
BUT IT'S
FRAGILE.
BRITTLE.

IT CAN BE *SHATTERED*.
BECAUSE ONCE YOU *KNOW*
ABOUT THE THING, IT'S
NOT *SECRET* ANYMORE.

AND
I *LIKE*
KNOWING
THINGS.

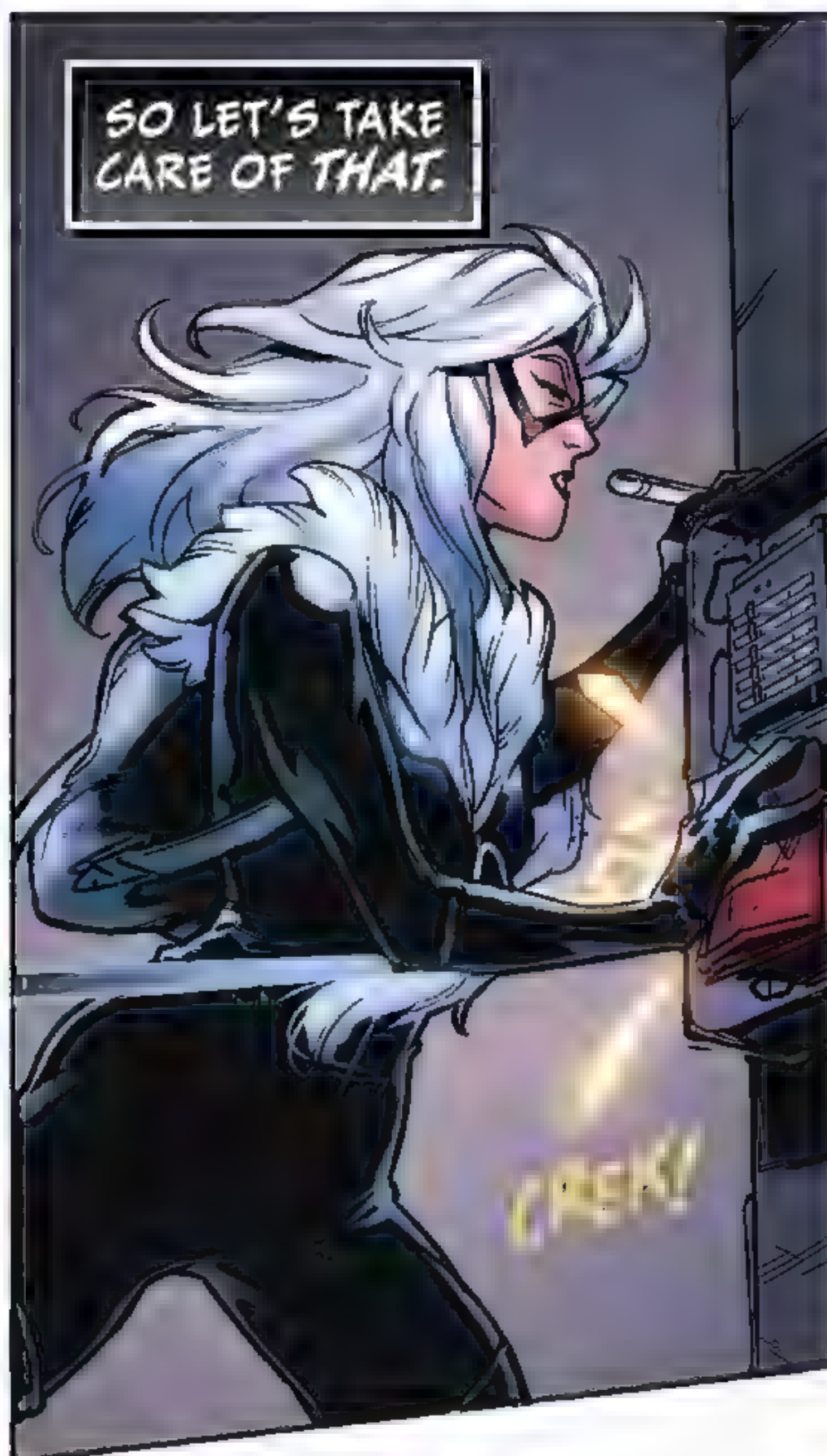
IT'S A
CURRENCY
LIKE ANY
OTHER.
A *TOOL*.

AND A THIEF
ALWAYS NEEDS
THE RIGHT TOOLS
FOR A JOB.



THE BLACKOUT TAKES CARE OF THE CAMERAS, MOTION SENSORS, SILENT ALARM...

AT LEAST UNTIL THE BATTERY KICKS IN.



SO LET'S TAKE CARE OF THAT.



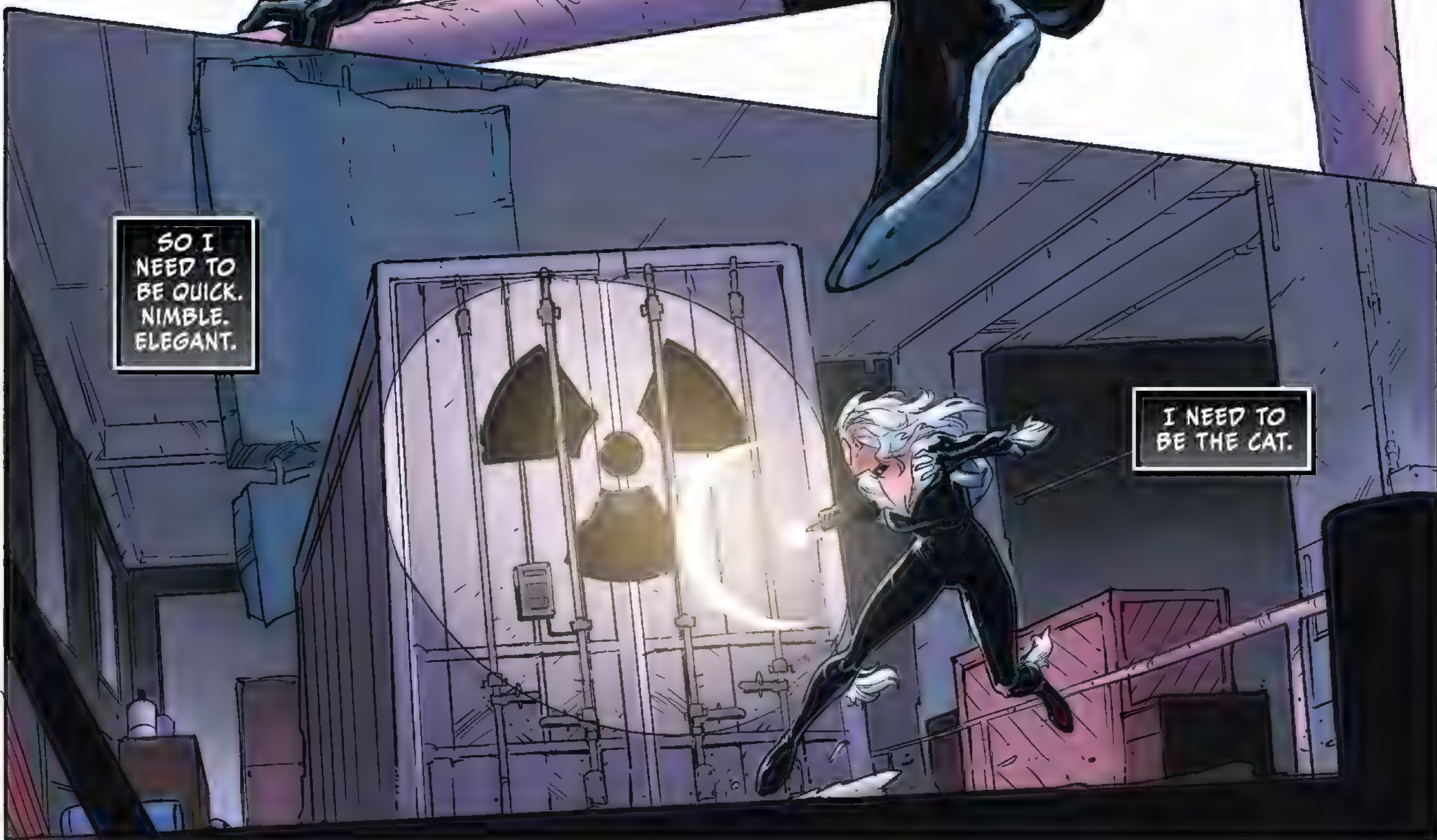
OF COURSE, THIS IS ALL JUST BUYING TIME.

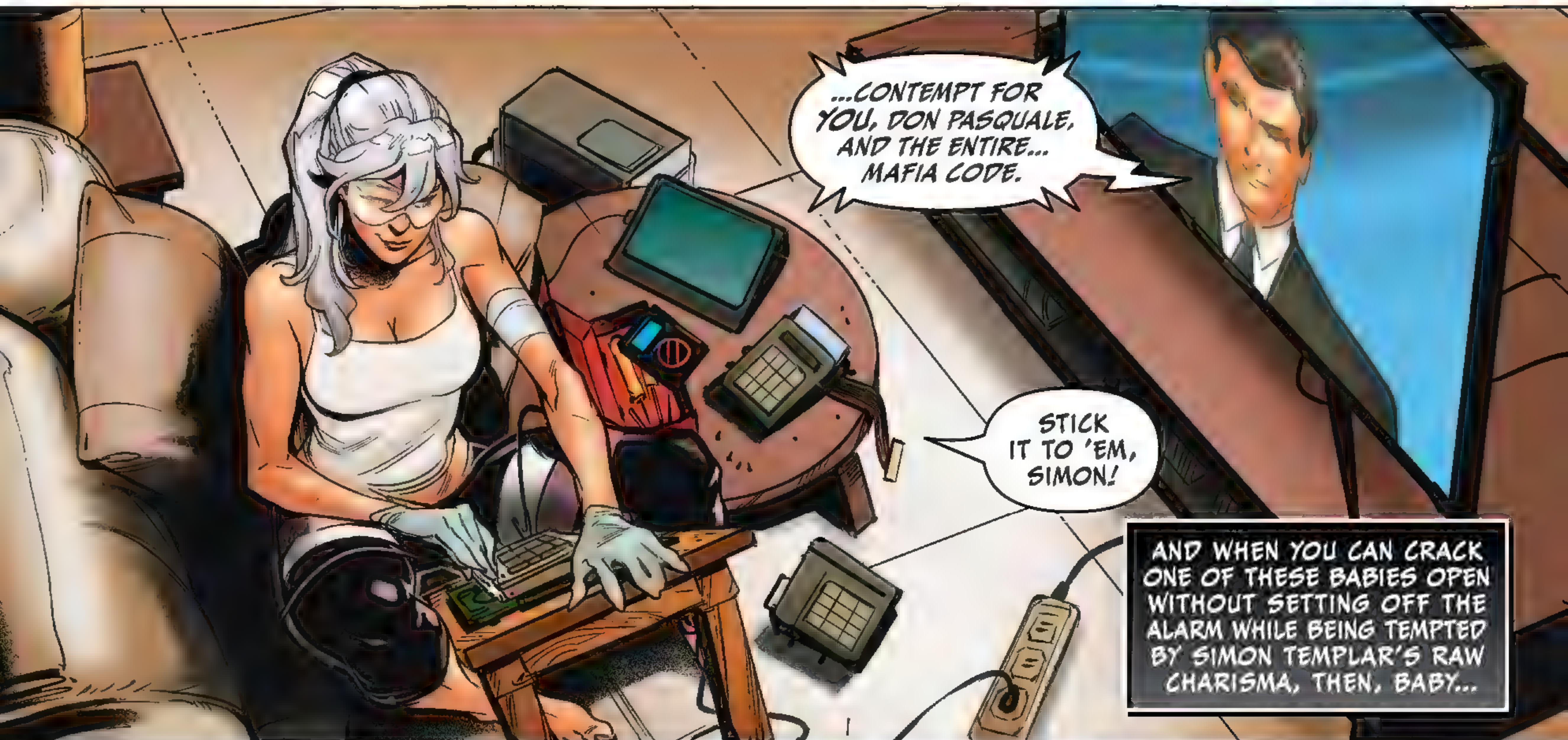
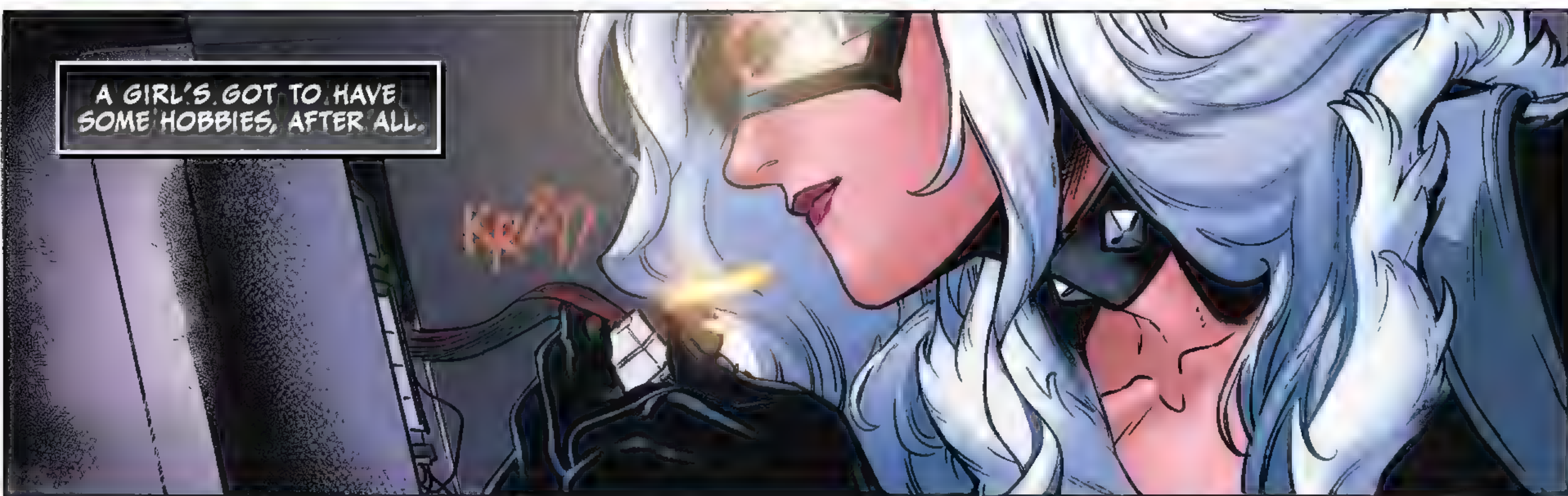
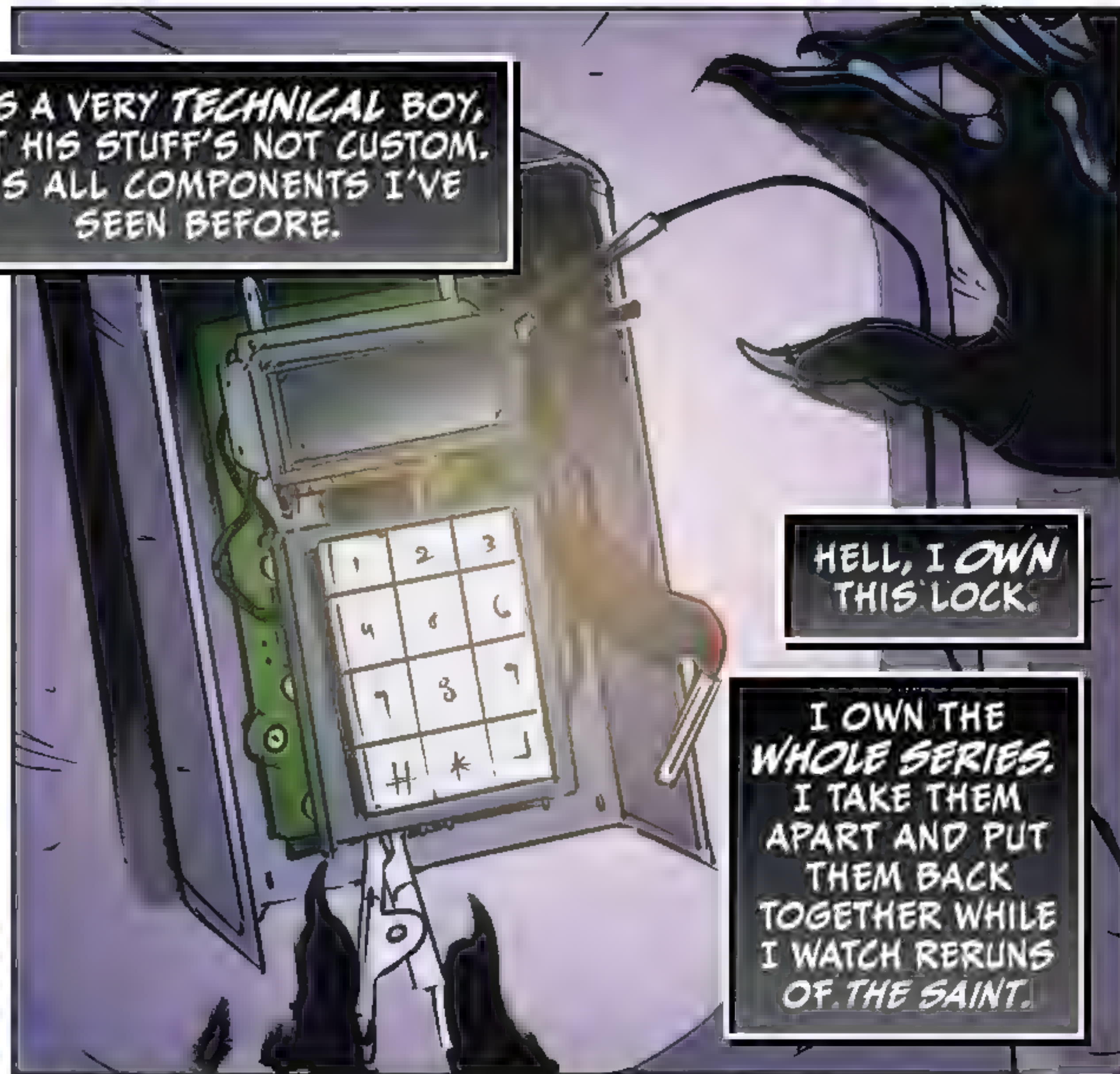
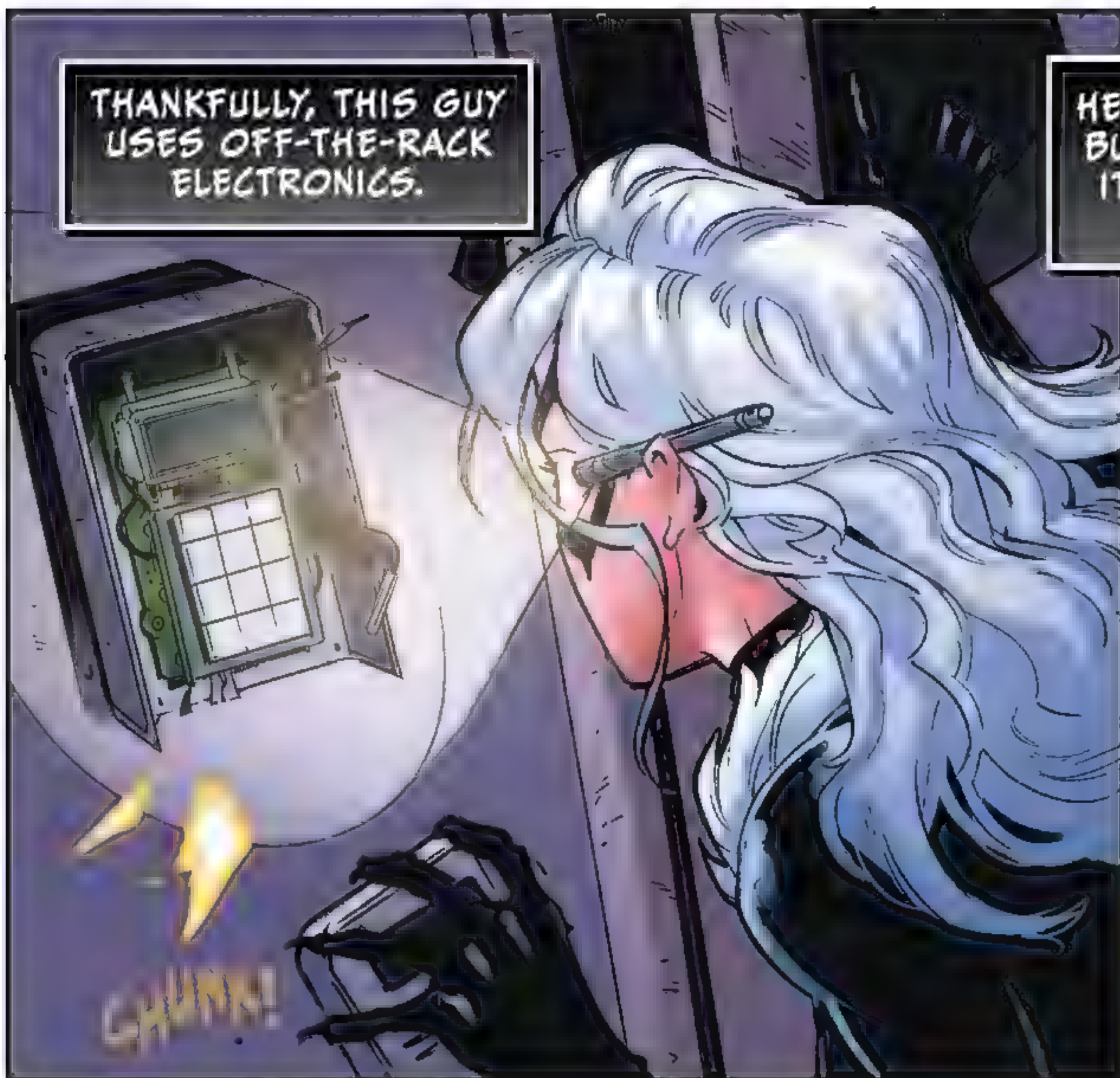


THE GUY I'M RIPPING OFF, HE'S GOT P-A-R-A-N-O-I-D TATTOOED ACROSS HIS KNUCKLES. HE'S GOING TO TWIG TO MY VISIT BEFORE LONG.

SO I NEED TO BE QUICK. NIMBLE. ELEGANT.

I NEED TO BE THE CAT.







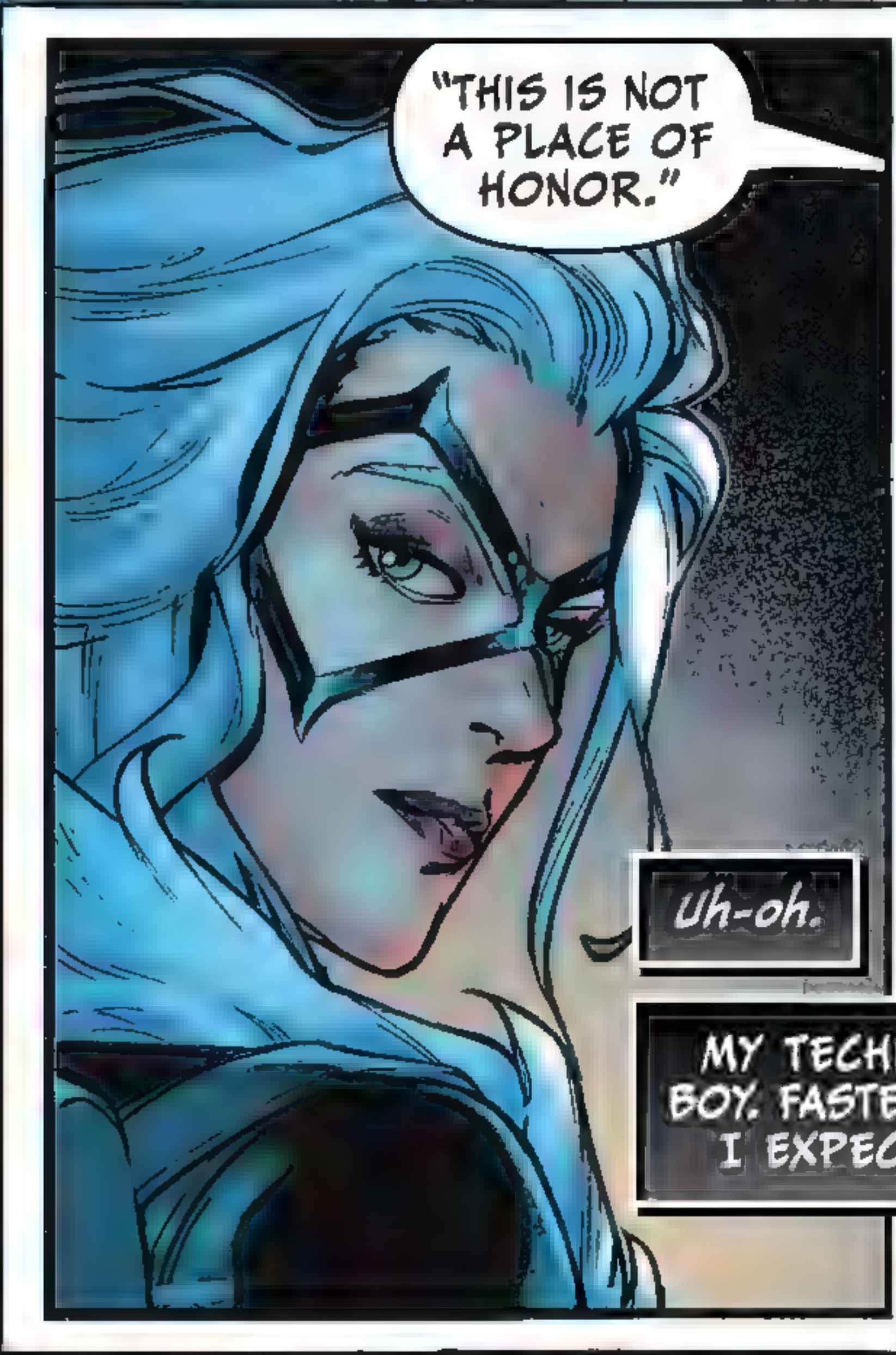


NOW.

LET'S SEE WHAT WE HAVE HERE.



NOW THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.



"THIS IS NOT A PLACE OF HONOR."

Uh-oh.

MY TECHNICAL BOY. FASTER THAN I EXPECTED.



YOU WANT TO ELABORATE ON THAT?

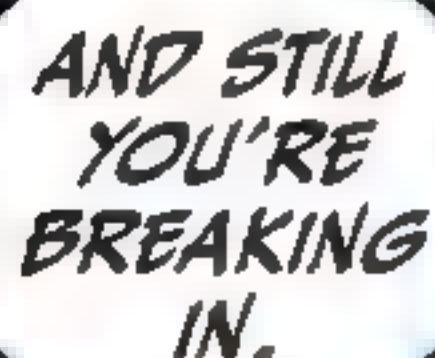
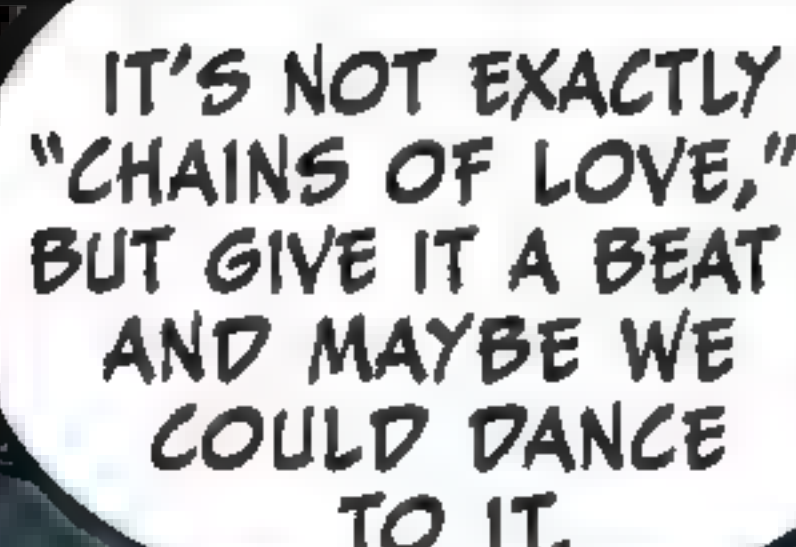
NUCLEAR WASTE. THAT STUFF'LL BE WITH US FOREVER, WILL OUTLAST OUR SOCIETY.

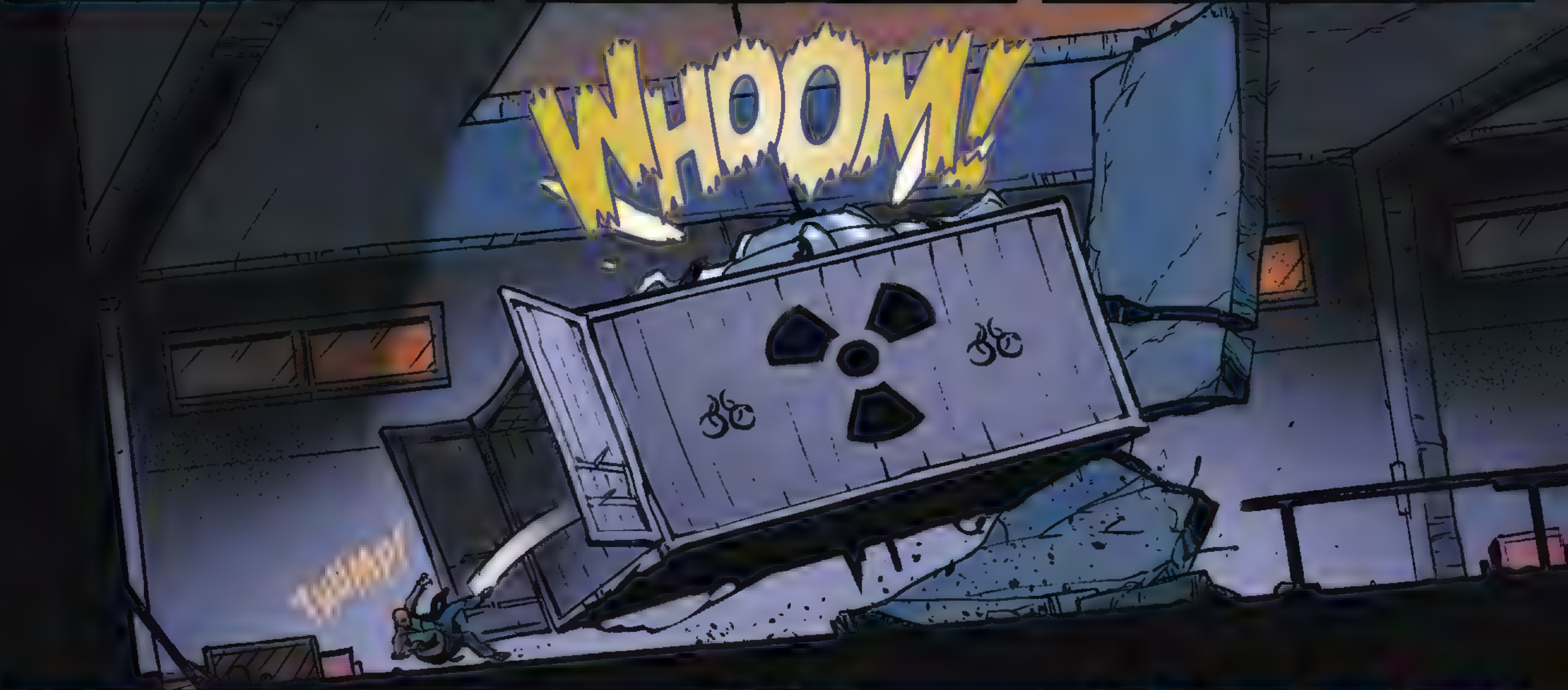
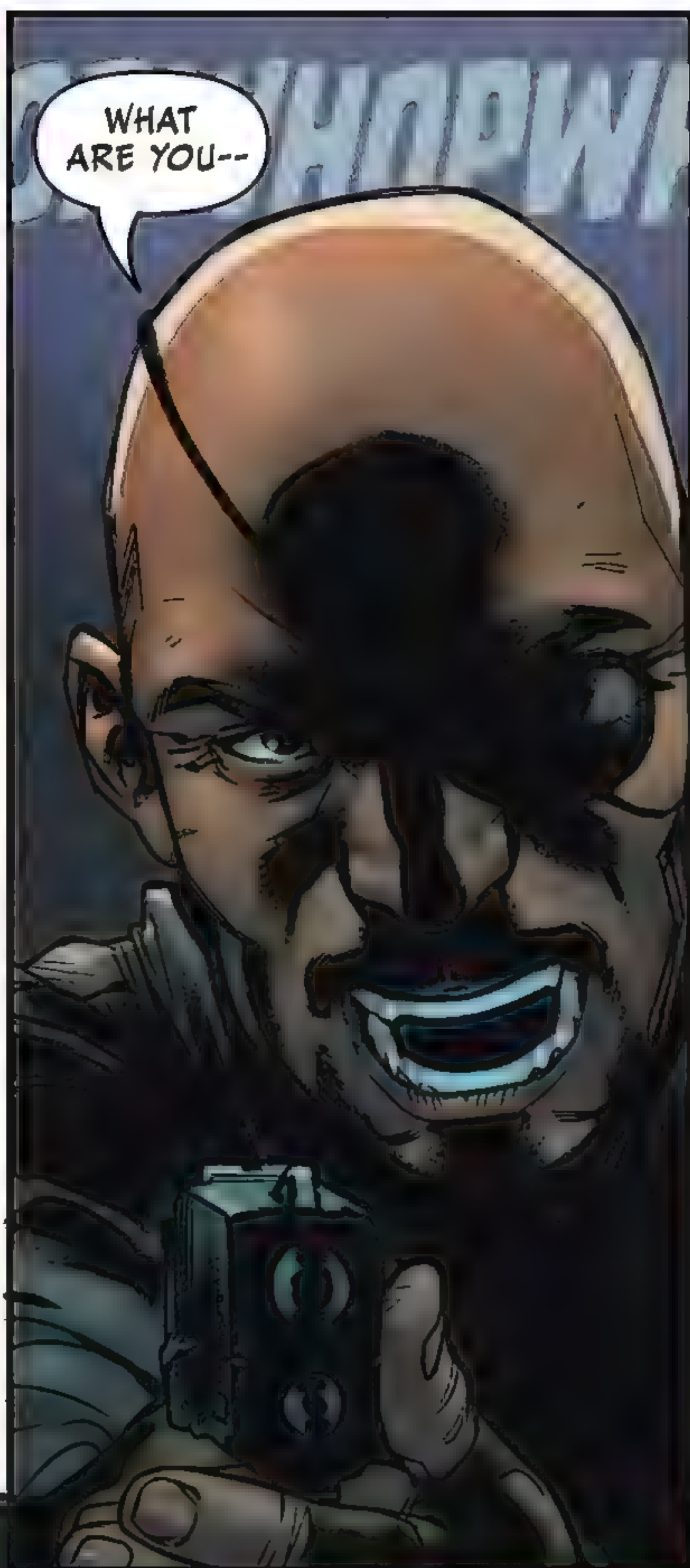
SO THE EGGHEADS SAT DOWN AND TRIED TO FIGURE IT OUT--

HOW COULD THEY MAKE IT SO PEOPLE WHO DIDN'T SPEAK ENGLISH ANYMORE, PEOPLE FOR WHOM *OUR* TIME WAS A DISTANT MEMORY, A MYTH...

HOW COULD THEY KEEP THESE FUTURE GENERATIONS AWAY FROM THESE STILL-DANGEROUS NUCLEAR-WASTE STORAGE AREAS?

THEY CAME UP WITH THE MESSAGE THEY WANTED TO GET ACROSS.







WAIT--!

DAMMIT,
NO!

HOPWHOPOWHO

YOU
ALL GOOD
DOWN THERE,
BOSS?

Oh,
YEAH.



LIKE A
CAT WITH
A MOUSE,
BRUNO...



...JUST
HAVING AN
ABSOLUTE
TIME.



GIVE IT UP,
NICK! TAKE THE
"L"! THERE'S NO
SHAME IN LOSING
TO THE BEST!

Grrrrrrr...



GIVE
UP?!

IF YOU
BEAT ME IN
A SPY THING, I
WOULDN'T HAVE
ANY HARD
FEELINGS.



I AIN'T
GOT IT
IN ME!

POP!
POP!

POP!

YAAAH!

plink!



DAMMIT, FURY!

WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM?!

THUMP!



THIS IS ME BEATING YOU IN A SPY THING!

TRY NOT TO HAVE ANY HARD FEELINGS!



SLEEVE GUN LIKE THAT, I MAKE IT, WHAT, A 7-ROUND MAG?!

.22 LONG RIFLE OR .25 ACP?!

I'D ASK IF IT CAME IN MEN'S, BUT I THINK WE'RE BOTH ABOVE THAT!



APPRECIATE IT!

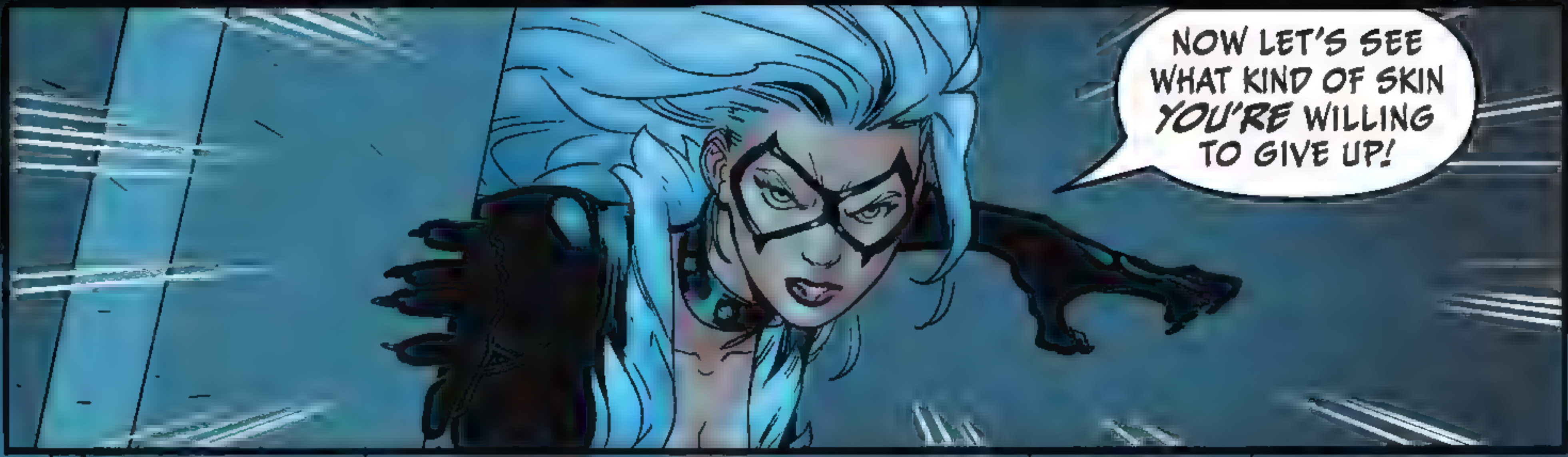
NOW TELL YOUR PILOT TO LAND!

YOU KNOW I GOT FOUR SHOTS LEFT, AND YOU KNOW ANY ONE OF THEM COULD CRACK OPEN YOUR PRETTY SKULL!



Oh, NICK, NICK, NICK...

I THINK YOU ARE SORELY UNDERESTIMATING EXACTLY HOW MUCH SKIN I HAVE IN THIS GAME.



NOW LET'S SEE
WHAT KIND OF SKIN
YOU'RE WILLING
TO GIVE UP!



RAAARGH!

SHICK!

BOING!

UGHKK!



HAHAHA!
GOTCHA!

POC!

THOK!

Whufff!

RRKKKK!



YIEEE!

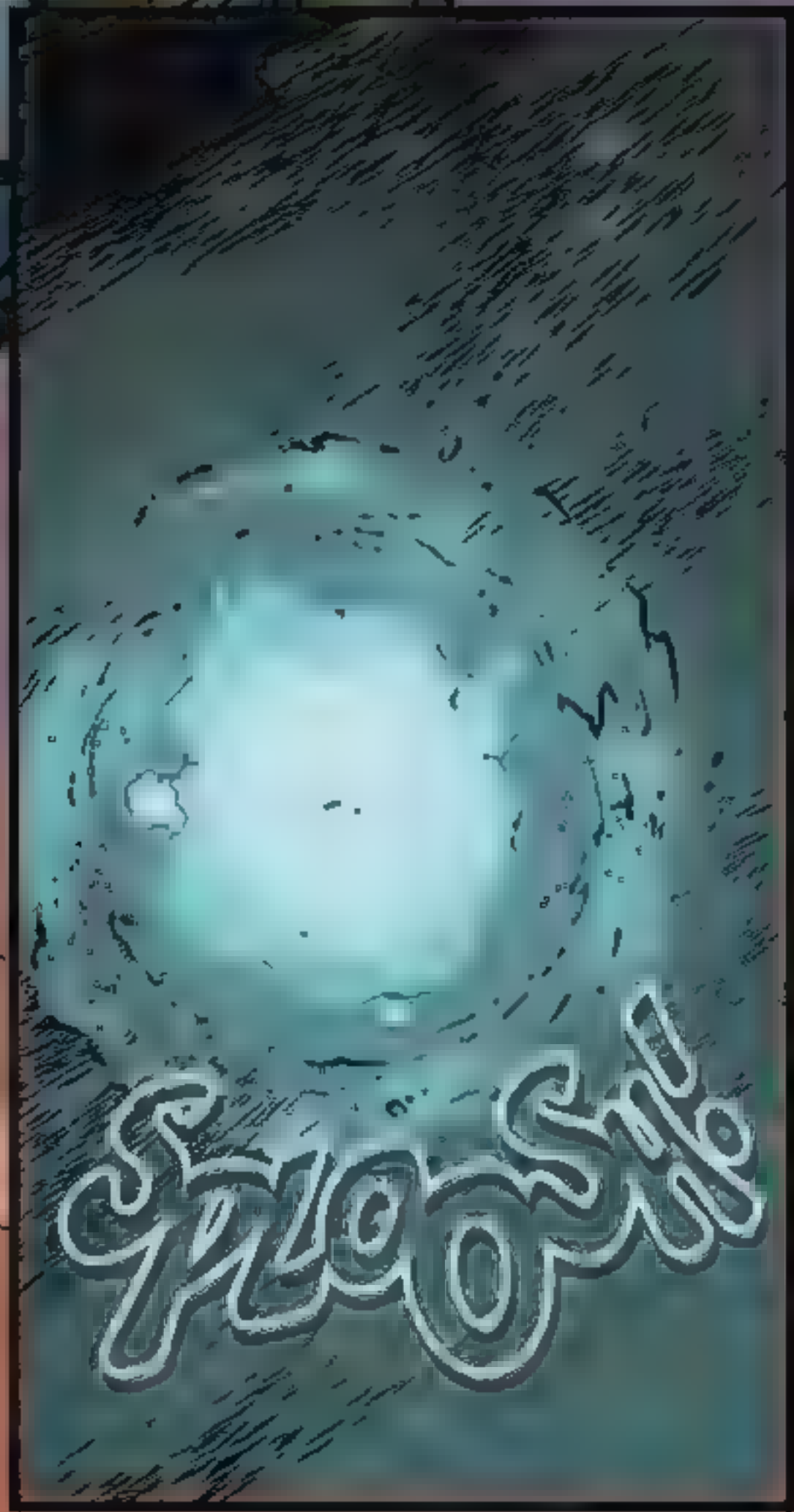
WHAT DO
YOU THINK,
NICK?

IS
THIS YOU
BEATING
ME?

YOU DON'T
KNOW WHAT
YOU'RE
DOING!

YOU DON'T
KNOW WHAT
SHE IS!

YOU DON'T
KNOW HOW
DANGEROUS
SHE IS!



LATER. THE NEW HIDEOUT.

WHAT'RE
YOU WAITING
FOR, BOYS?

LET'S
CRACK THIS
NUT.

VREEENNCHH!

CHU!
CHU!
CHU!

MESSING
WITH NICK
FURY.

CHU!
CHU!
CHU!

VREEEN

S.H.I.E.L.D.
ISN'T
AROUND
ANYMORE,
SURE.

BUT A GUY LIKE FURY?
THAT JUST MAKES HIM
MORE DANGEROUS.

DOESN'T MATTER.

FOR THIS JOB,
I'D PUNCH OUT
GALACTUS
IF THAT'S WHAT
IT TOOK.

LET FURY
COME.

LET THEM
ALL COME.

THEY
WON'T
STOP
ME.

IT'S
OPEN,
HARDY.



WELL,
WELL,
WELL...



CONSIDER
THE CAT.

THE CAT KNOWS
WHAT SHE WANTS,
AND SHE'LL GET IT.

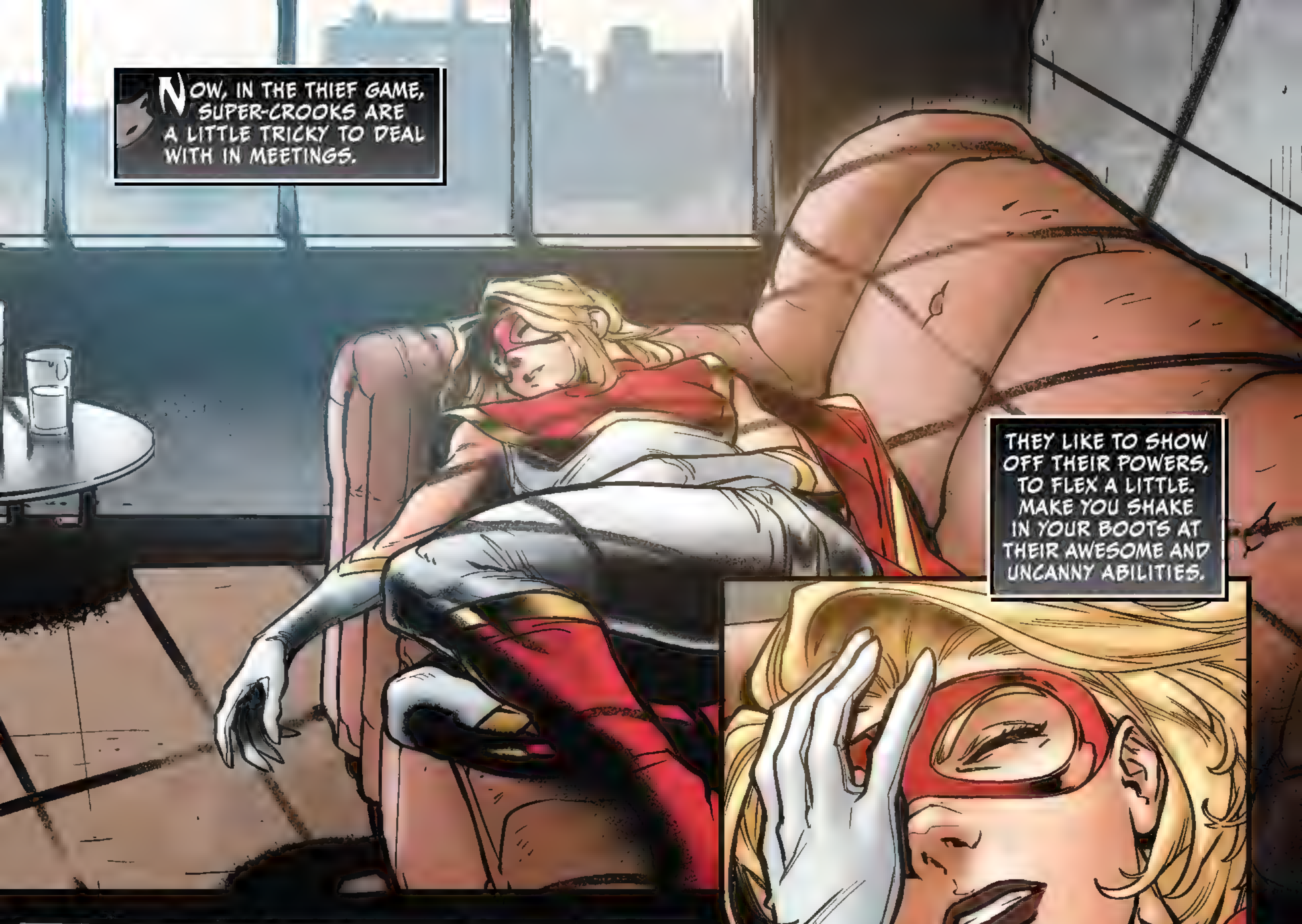
AND DAMN THE
CONSEQUENCES.

THIS IS IT,
BOYS.

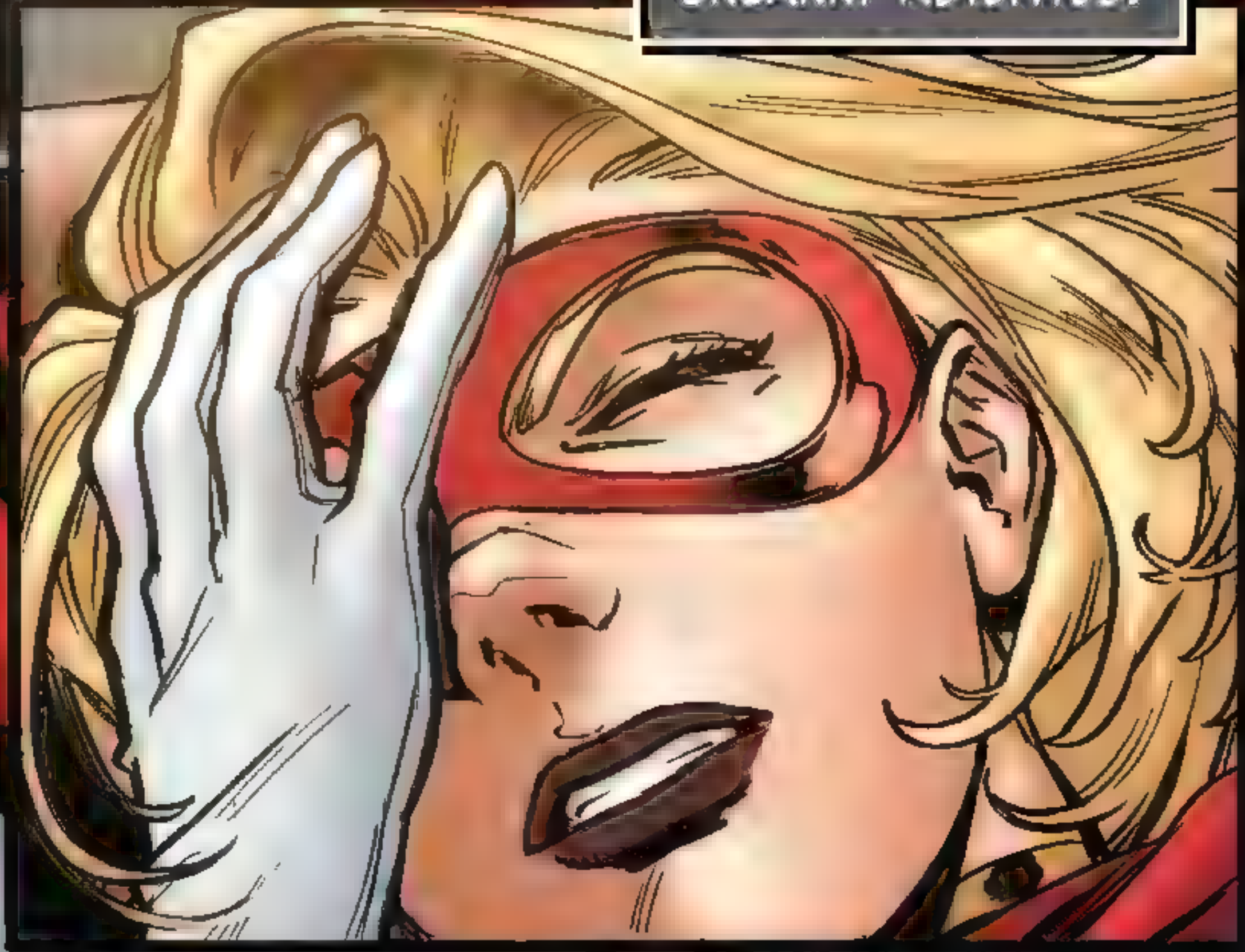
NO TURNING
BACK NOW.



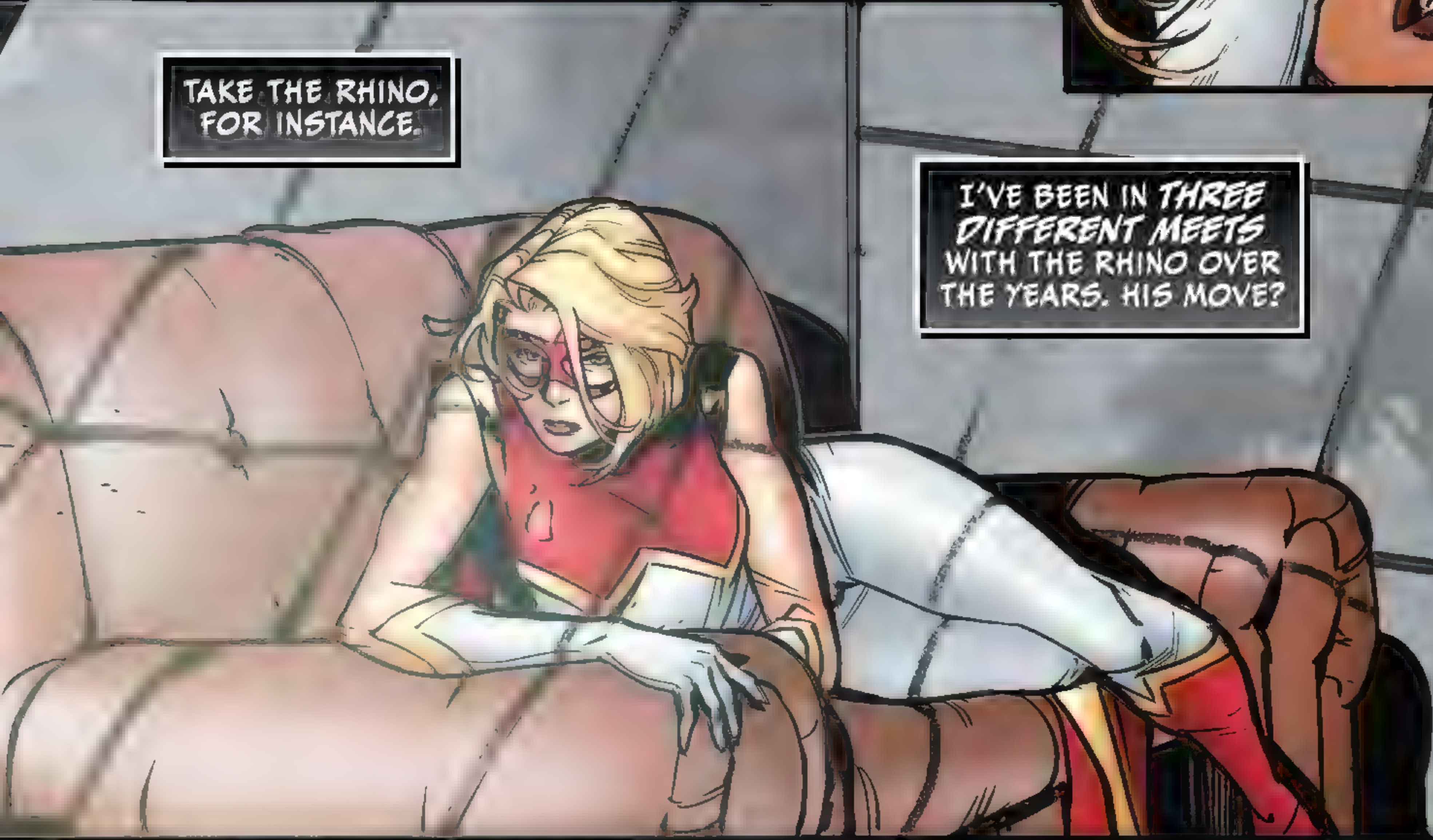
NOW, IN THE THIEF GAME, SUPER-CROOKS ARE A LITTLE TRICKY TO DEAL WITH IN MEETINGS.



THEY LIKE TO SHOW OFF THEIR POWERS, TO FLEX A LITTLE. MAKE YOU SHAKE IN YOUR BOOTS AT THEIR AWESOME AND UNCANNY ABILITIES.



TAKE THE RHINO, FOR INSTANCE.



I'VE BEEN IN THREE DIFFERENT MEETS WITH THE RHINO OVER THE YEARS. HIS MOVE?

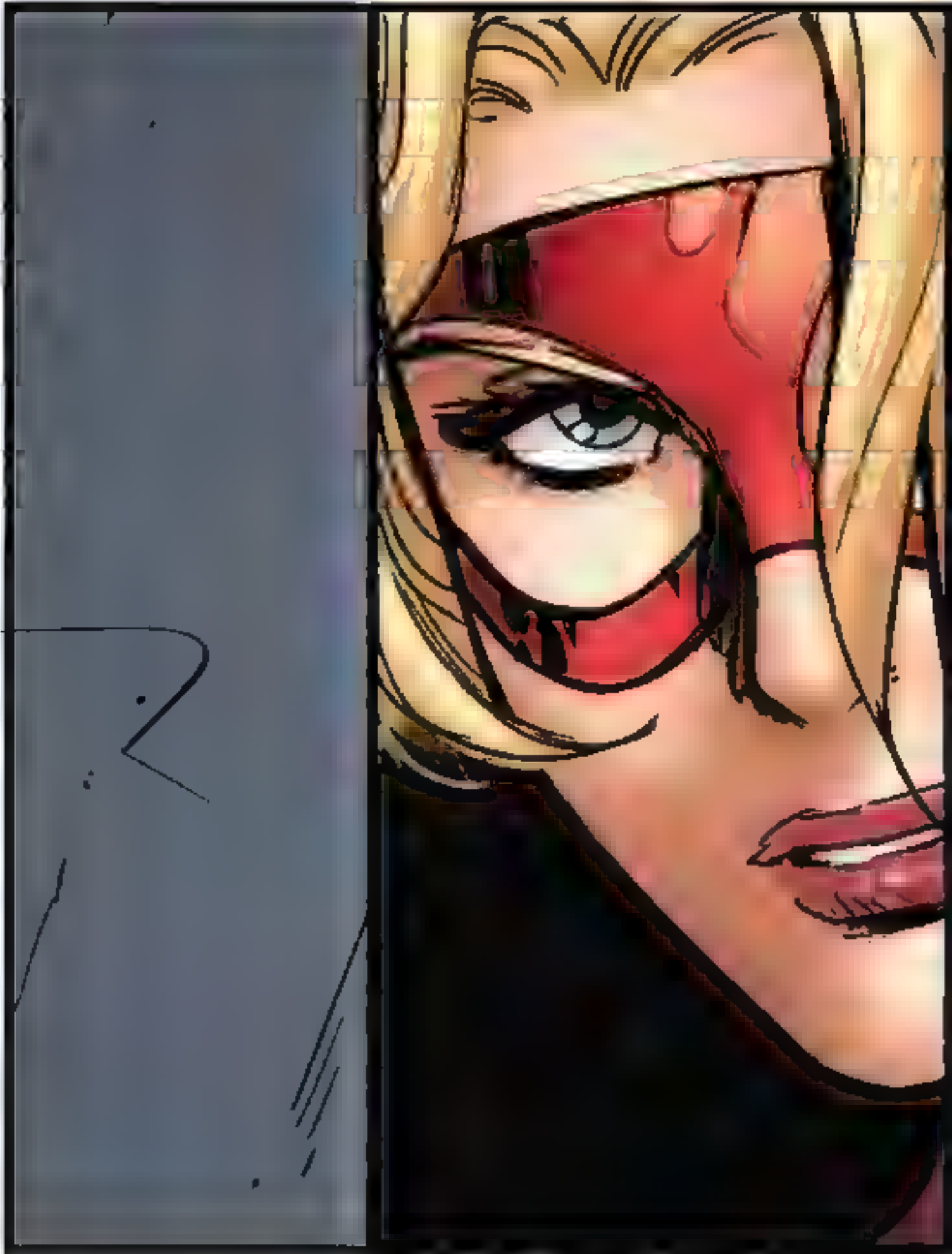
HE CRUSHES A POOL BALL IN HIS HAND. GRINDS IT INTO DUST. THAT'S A WHOLE LOT OF P.S.I. RIGHT THERE.



ONE OF THOSE MEETS? THERE WASN'T EVEN A POOL TABLE AT THE PLACE.

HE BROUGHT HIS OWN POOL BALL. FROM HOME.

WHAT I'M SAYING IS, SUPER VILLAINS LIKE TO GO STRAIGHT TO THE IRON HAND. THEY SKIP THE VELVET GLOVE ENTIRELY.



NOT ME, THOUGH.

AFTER ALL, YOU GET MORE FLIES WITH HONEY, RIGHT? SOMETIMES, ALL YOU NEED...

...IS A LITTLE
HOSPITALITY.

WELL,
HEY THERE,
SLEEPYHEAD!





COME ON OVER.

YOU'VE GOT TO BE FAMISHED AFTER ALL THAT.

I'VE GOT A WHOLE VERMONT SMORGASBORD OVER HERE.



WHO ARE YOU? WHERE AM I?



FELICIA HARDY. THE BLACK CAT.

CHIEF THIEF.

BADDEST B IN NYC.

AND THIS IS MY HIDEOUT. WELL, ONE OF THEM.



RIGHT.

AND YOU'RE RIPLEY RYAN. BETTER KNOWN AS STAR.

EX-JOURNALIST. WANNABE SUPER VILLAIN.

WANNABE?

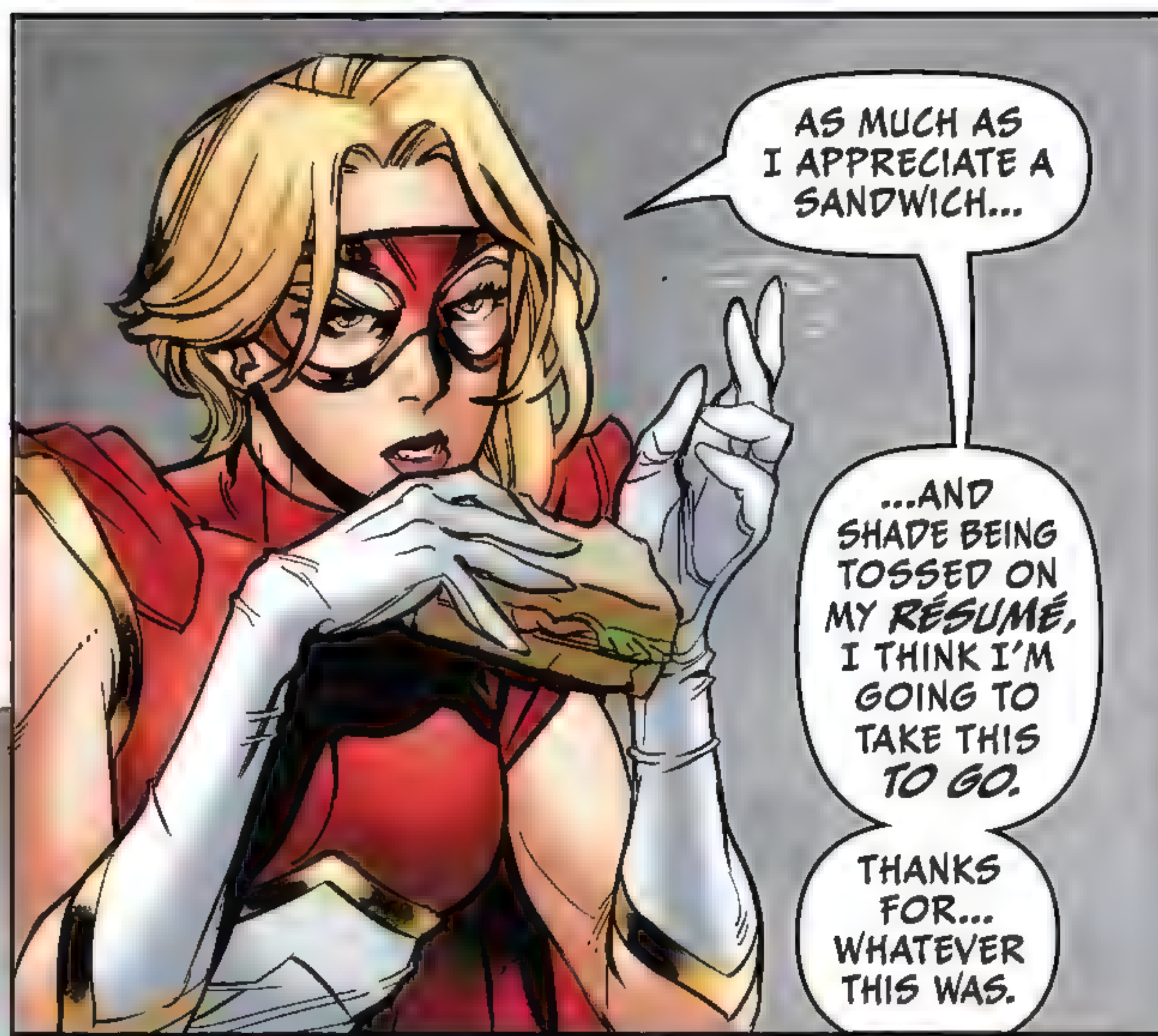


SAYS MS. "CHAMPAGNE AND CORNED BEEF" OVER HERE.

WELL, EXCUSE ME.



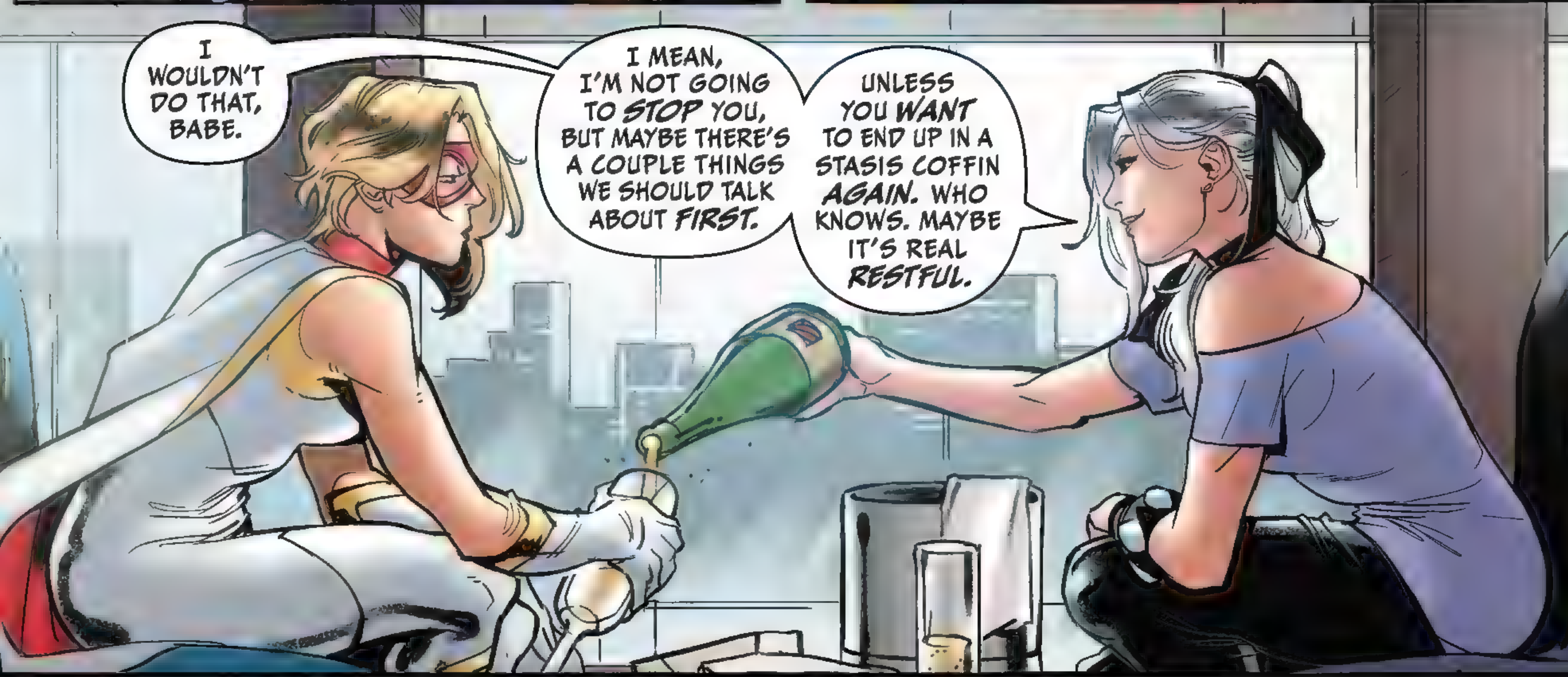
I DIDN'T
REALIZE GETTING
YOUR GUTS PUNCHED
OUT BY CAPTAIN
MARVEL* AND ENDING UP
IN A STASIS COFFIN**
WAS CONSIDERED
SUCCESSFUL.



AS MUCH AS
I APPRECIATE A
SANDWICH...

...AND
SHADE BEING
TOSSED ON
MY *RÉSUMÉ*,
I THINK I'M
GOING TO
TAKE THIS
TO GO.

THANKS
FOR...
WHATEVER
THIS WAS.



I
WOULDN'T
DO THAT,
BABE.

I MEAN,
I'M NOT GOING
TO *STOP* YOU,
BUT MAYBE THERE'S
A COUPLE THINGS
WE SHOULD TALK
ABOUT *FIRST*.

UNLESS
YOU WANT
TO END UP IN A
STASIS COFFIN
AGAIN. WHO
KNOWS. MAYBE
IT'S REAL
RESTFUL.

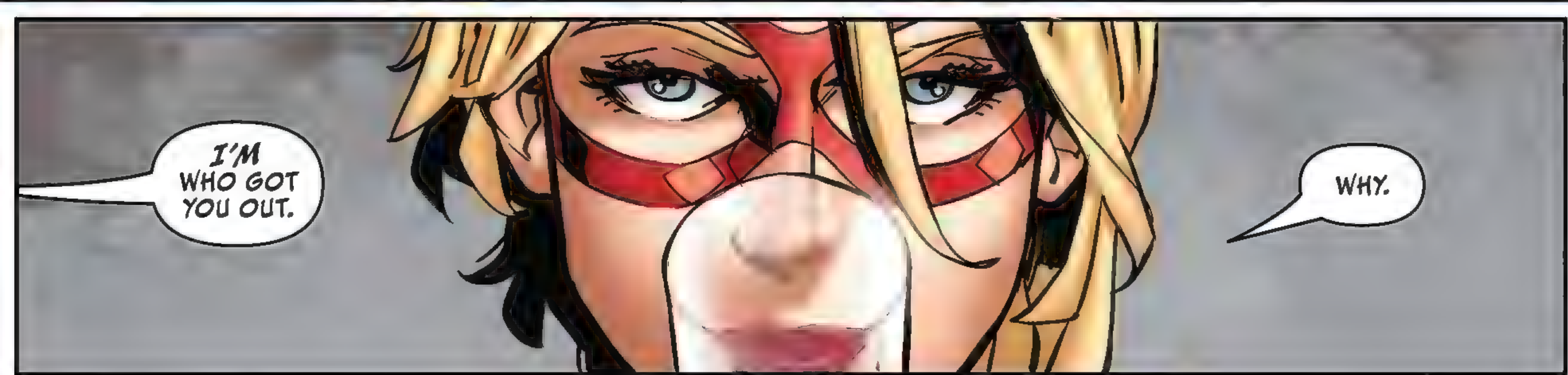


LOOK,
I STILL
DON'T KNOW
WHAT YOU'RE
TALKING
ABOUT--

FURY,
NICHOLAS
JR.

CRUSADING
FORMER-S.H.I.E.L.D.
SUPERSPY.

HE
TRACKED YOU
DOWN, TOOK
YOU DOWN,
LOCKED YOU
DOWN.



I'M
WHO GOT
YOU OUT.

WHY.



I HAVE A CLIENT.

A REAL HEAVY HITTER. SOMEONE YOU DON'T WANT TO MESS WITH. KIND OF GUY WHO HAS A **WHOLE NATION'S RESOURCES** AT HIS DISPOSAL.

DOCTOR DOOM. YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT **DOCTOR DOOM**.

WHY, I'D NEVER COMPROMISE A CLIENT'S ANONYMITY.



MONICA RAPPACCINI.

EVER HEARD OF HER?

NO.

OF COURSE YOU HAVEN'T-- YOU'RE A BABY SUPER VILLAIN.



RAPPACCINI WAS A BIG BRAIN OVER AT A.I.M.

CYBERNETICIST, ULTRAPHYSICIST, THE WHOLE SHEBANG.

MY CLIENT WANTS RAPPACCINI IN HIS POCKET, WANTS HER TO WORK FOR HIM.

DIABOLIC SUPER VILLAIN STUFF.

YOU KNOW, CONQUERING THE WORLD AND ALL THAT JAZZ.

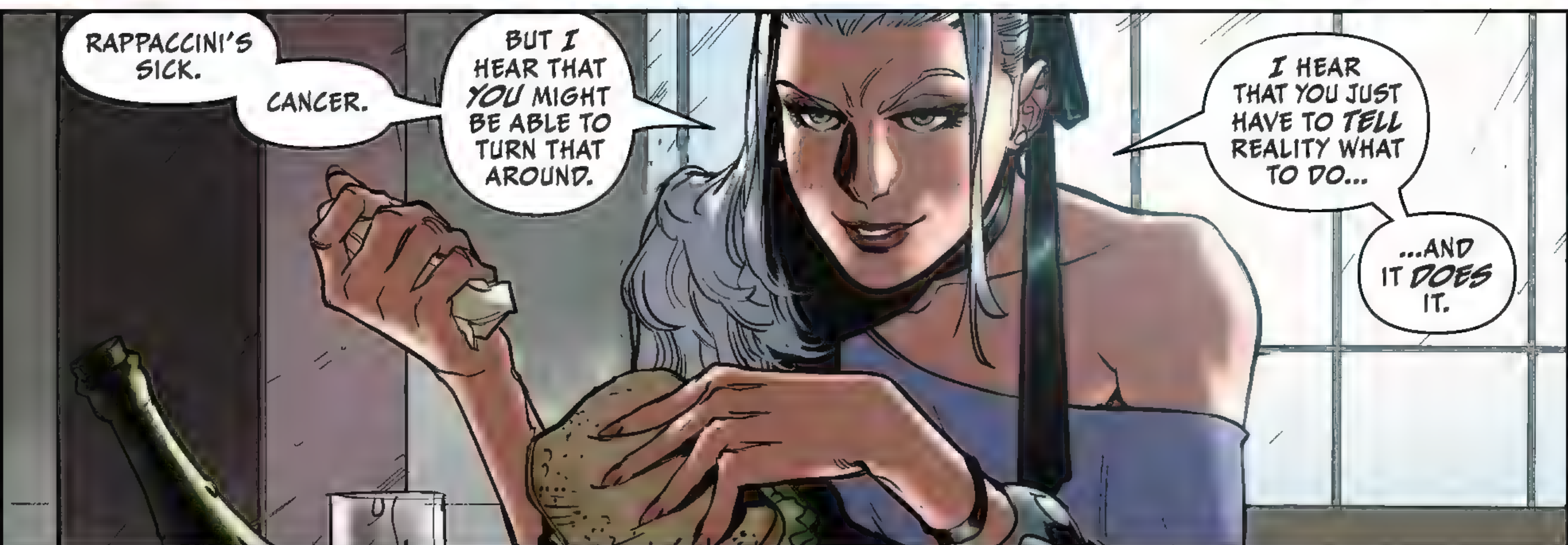


SO FAR I DON'T SEE ANYTHING THAT INVOLVES ME.

YOU WANT SOMEONE IN YOUR POCKET, YOU SOLVE A **PROBLEM** FOR THEM.

MY CLIENT IS A BUSY GUY AND HIRED ME TO HANDLE RAPPACCINI'S PROBLEM.

THAT'S WHERE YOU COME IN.



RAPPACCINI'S SICK.

CANCER.

BUT I HEAR THAT YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO TURN THAT AROUND.

I HEAR THAT YOU JUST HAVE TO TELL REALITY WHAT TO DO...

...AND IT **DOES** IT.



SO WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?



WELL, I **DID** FREE YOU FROM FURY.

BUT WE'LL CALL THAT A **GOOD DEED**.

LIKE I SAID, YOU'RE A **BABY SUPER VILLAIN**. YOU GO OUT THERE, FURY'S GOING TO GET YOU AGAIN. AND THIS TIME, YOU'LL **STAY GOT**.

ME? I'VE BEEN IN THIS GAME MY WHOLE LIFE. I CAN KEEP YOU OUT OF FURY'S CROSSHAIRS. HE'S GOOD...



...BUT HE'S GOT **NOTHING** ON ME.

NOT IN **NEW YORK**.

WHEN WE STOLE YOU, WE ALSO **RIPPED** OFF FURY'S FILES.

AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE **SCANNER** HE USED TO **FIND** YOU, TO **TRACK** YOUR **UNIQUE ENERGY SIGNATURE**.



NOW, KNOWING WHAT HE WAS USING, WE WHIPPED UP A LITTLE **COUNTERMEASURE**.

HERE. AS LONG AS YOU WEAR THAT, YOU'RE **INVISIBLE** TO HIM. AND IF YOU DO THIS JOB FOR ME, YOU CAN **KEEP** IT.

AND I'LL SET YOU UP WITH AN **I.D.** AND **CASH**, SO YOU CAN **FIGURE** OUT WHAT YOU WANT TO DO NEXT.

I'LL TELL YOU RIGHT NOW. MY POWER ISN'T STRONG ENOUGH TO **CURE CANCER**. SURE, IT MIGHT **CLEAN** HER UP.

BUT IT'LL JUST **COME BACK**.

BUT I **AM** STRONG ENOUGH TO JUST **WALK** OUT OF HERE WITH YOUR **LITTLE DOODAD**.

AND I'M **PRETTY SURE** THERE'S **NOTHING** YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT.

WELL...

I HAVE A
POWER TOO,
YOU KNOW.

...SO MUCH FOR
THE VELVET GLOVE.

KRASH!

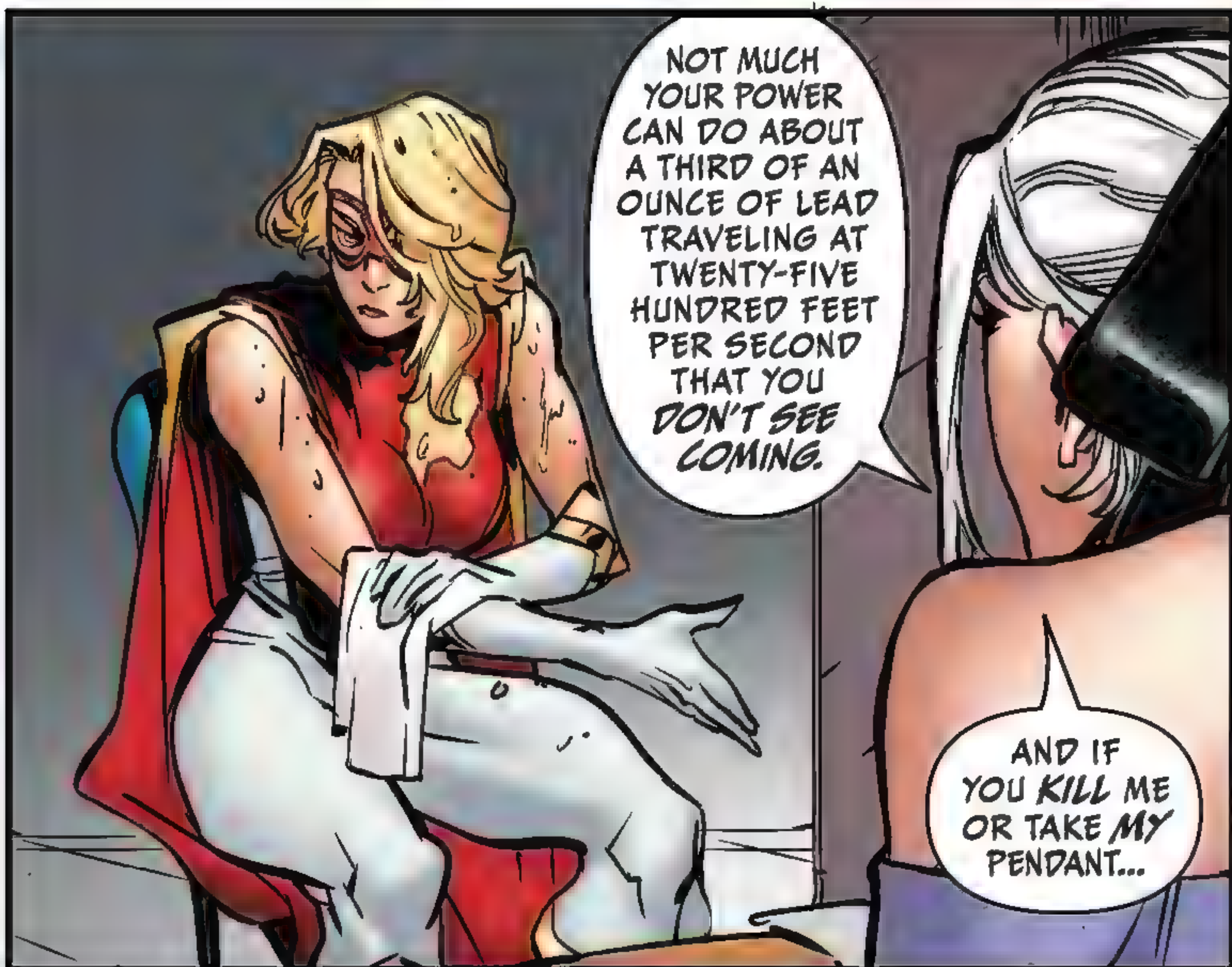
I CAUSE
BAD LUCK.

NOW, I
KNOW YOU'VE
GOT SOME JUICE,
AND YOU COULD
RIP ME OFF, OR
KILL ME, OR
WHATEVER.



BUT YOU'RE NOT BULLETPROOF.

NOT ALL THE TIME.



NOT MUCH YOUR POWER CAN DO ABOUT A THIRD OF AN OUNCE OF LEAD TRAVELING AT TWENTY-FIVE HUNDRED FEET PER SECOND THAT YOU DON'T SEE COMING.

AND IF YOU KILL ME OR TAKE MY PENDANT...



...YOU WON'T SEE IT COMING.



AS FOR YOUR POWER? YOU LET ME WORRY ABOUT THAT.

I THINK I MIGHT KNOW HOW TO GIVE YOU A LITTLE BOOST.



Oh YEAH? HOW'S THAT?



TRADE SECRET.

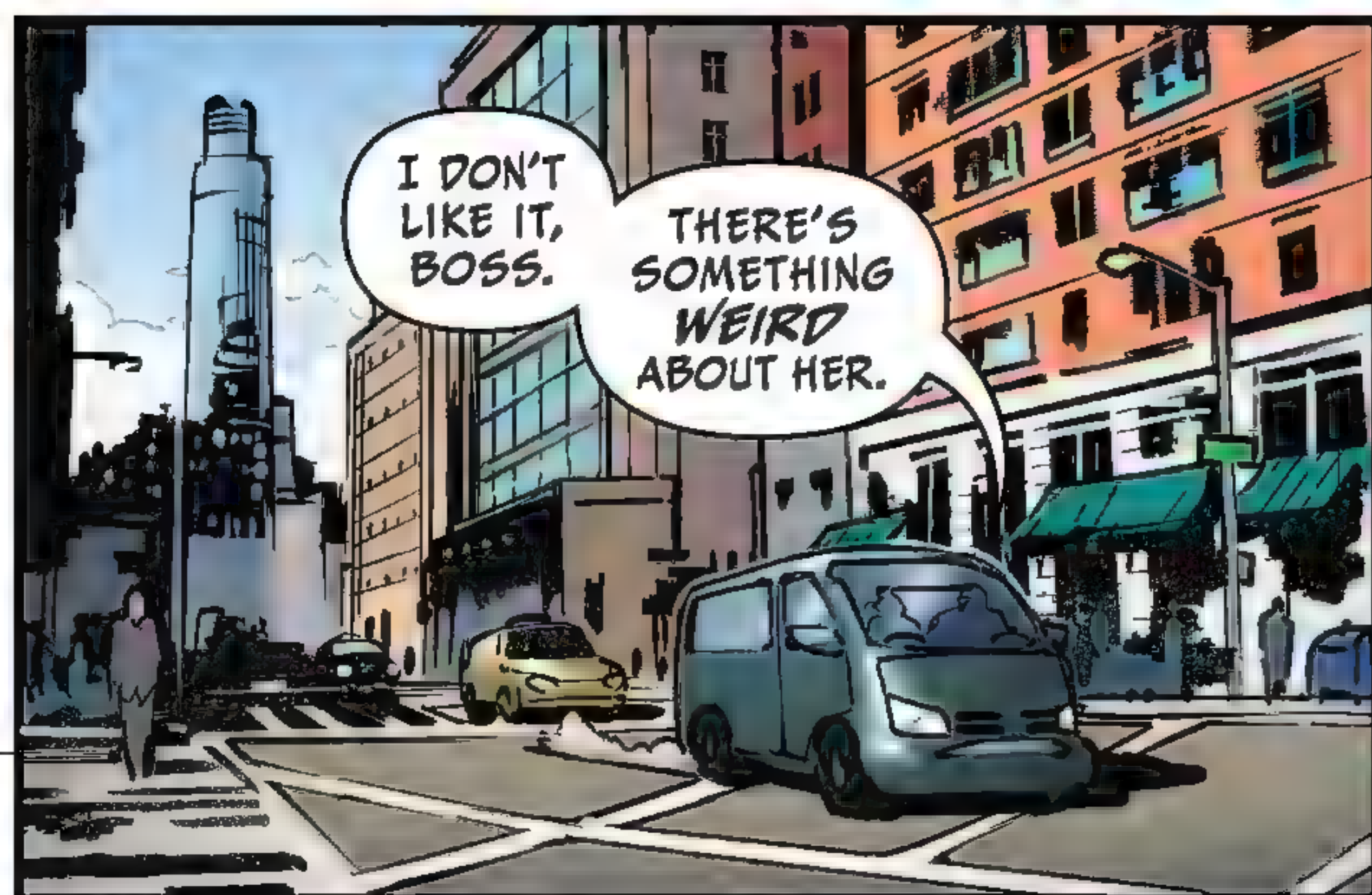
SO: YOU IN?



SHE WENT FOR IT?

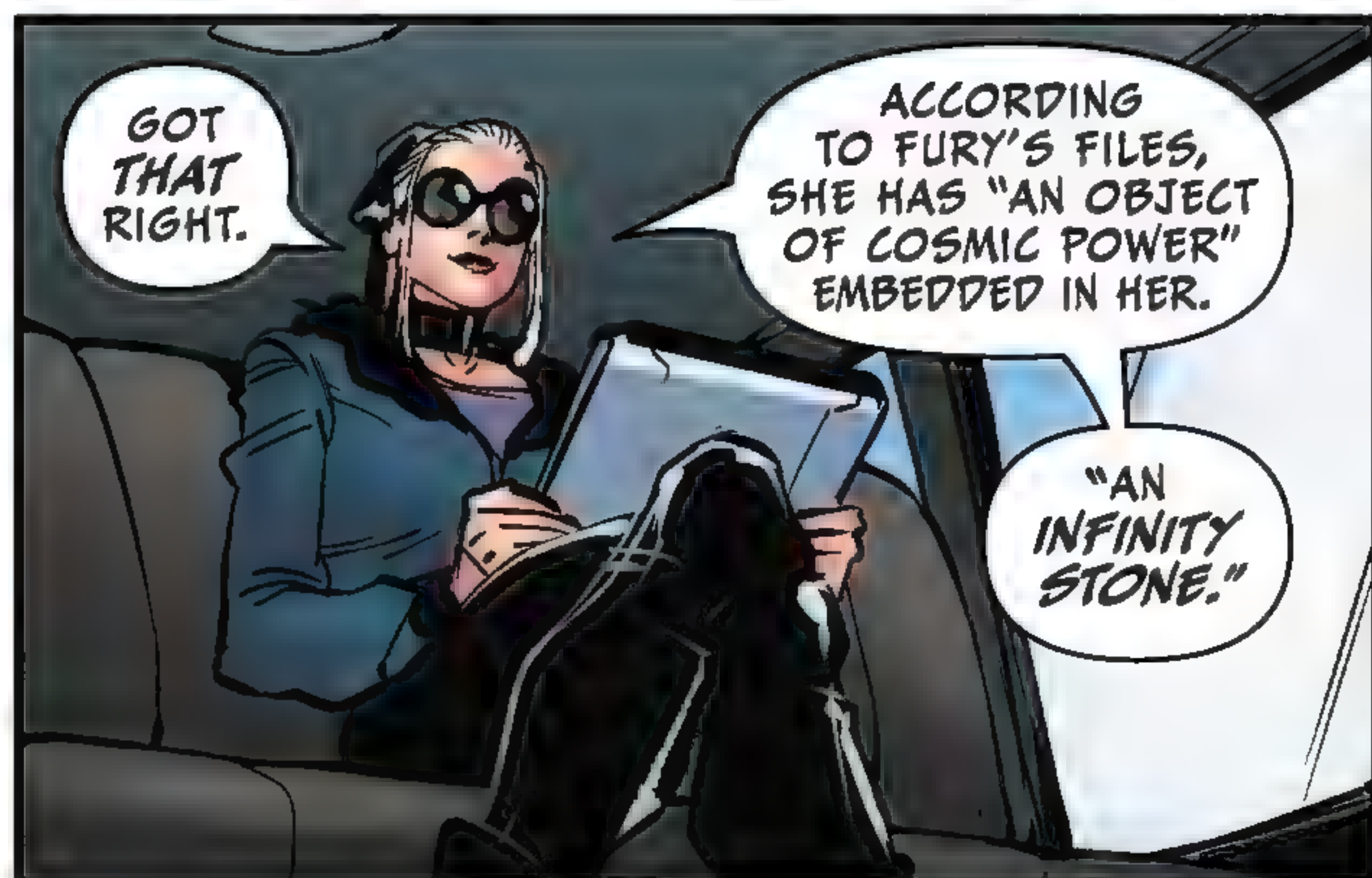
OF COURSE SHE WENT FOR IT.

FURY'S A PAIN IN MY NECK, BUT HE MAKES A GREAT INCENTIVE.



I DON'T LIKE IT, BOSS.

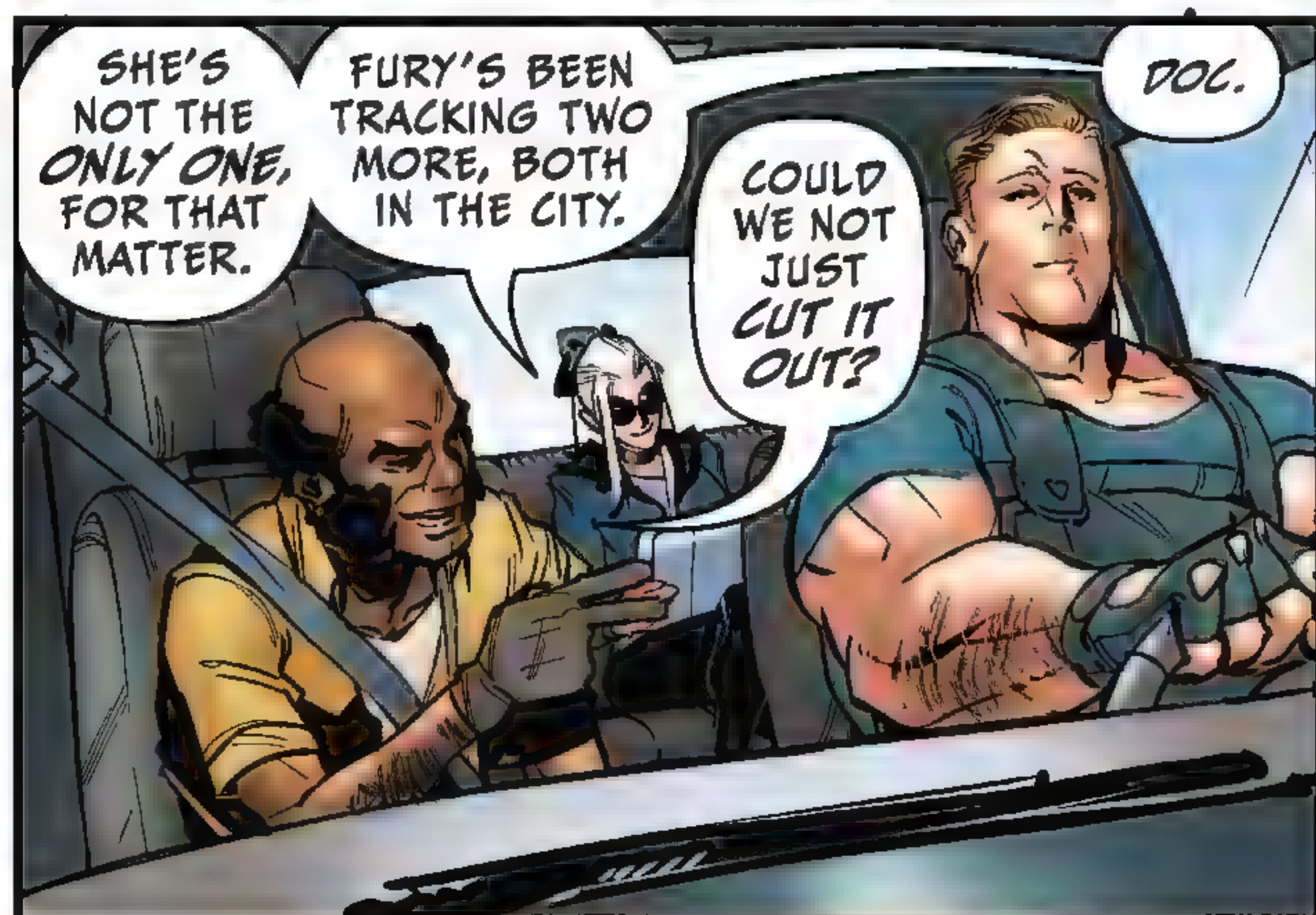
THERE'S SOMETHING WEIRD ABOUT HER.



GOT THAT RIGHT.

ACCORDING TO FURY'S FILES, SHE HAS "AN OBJECT OF COSMIC POWER" EMBEDDED IN HER.

"AN INFINITY STONE."



SHE'S NOT THE ONLY ONE, FOR THAT MATTER.

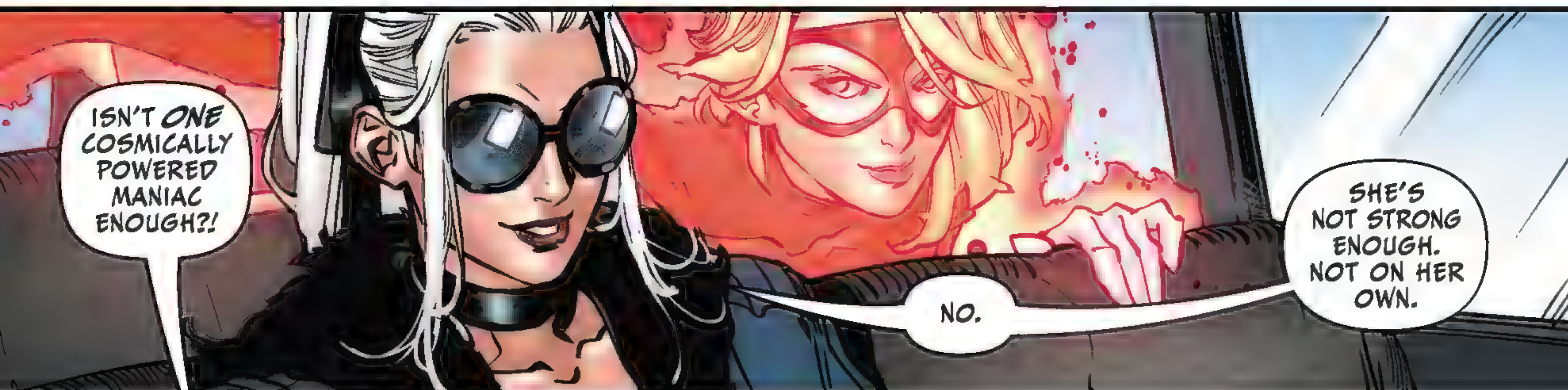
FURY'S BEEN TRACKING TWO MORE, BOTH IN THE CITY.

COULD WE NOT JUST CUT IT OUT?

DOC.



EAVESDROP.



ISN'T ONE COSMICALLY POWERED MANIAC ENOUGH?!

NO.

SHE'S NOT STRONG ENOUGH. NOT ON HER OWN.



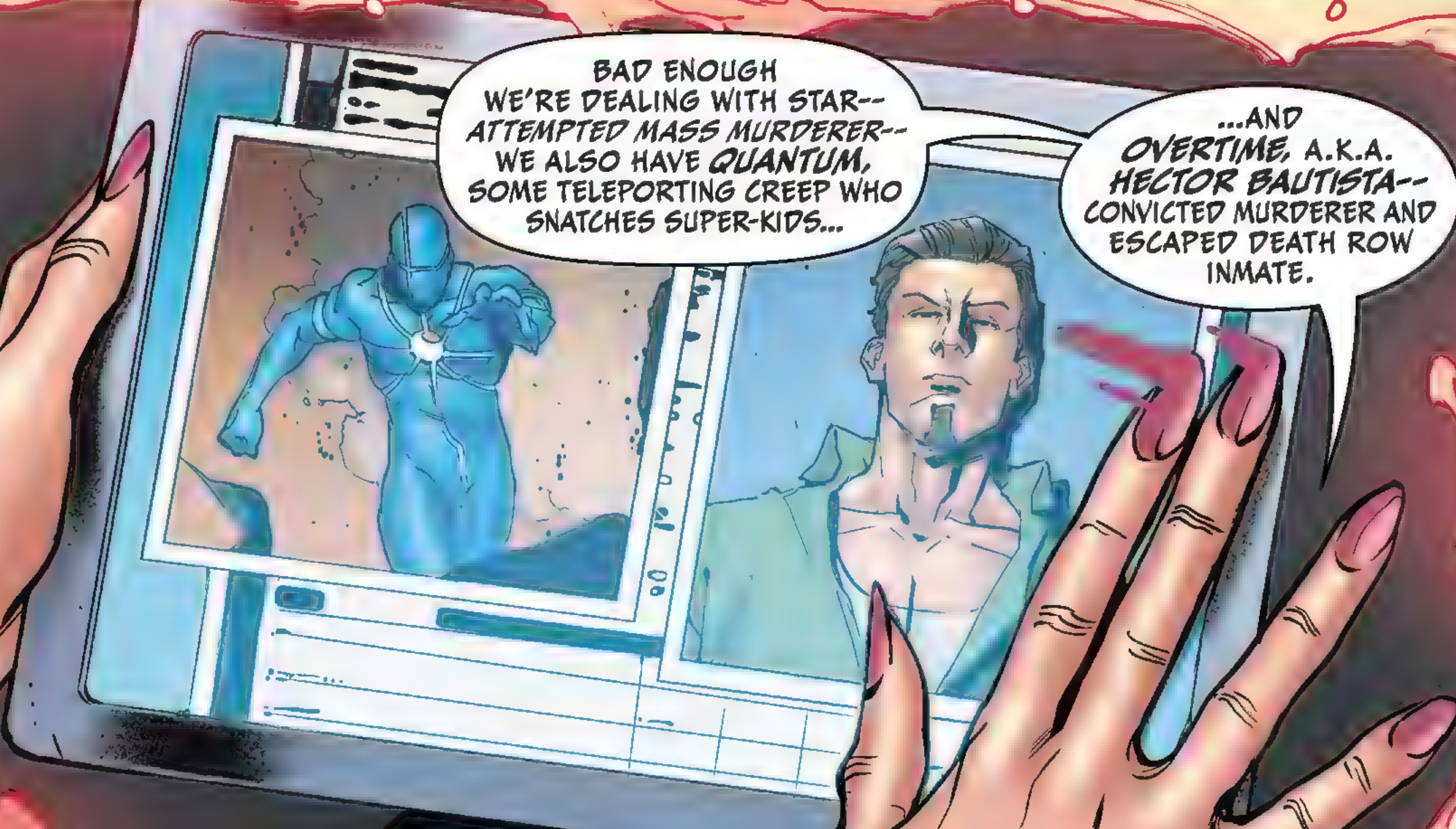
ACCORDING TO FURY'S NOTES, THESE DUMMIES ARE PRETTY POWERFUL, SURE...

GO ON...

...BUT HE BELIEVES THAT IF THESE PEOPLE GET *CLOSE* TO ONE ANOTHER, THEN THEIR POWERS INCREASE GEOMETRICALLY.

IN ORDER FOR STAR TO DO WHAT I *NEED* HER TO DO, WE HAVE TO GET HER CLOSE TO A COUPLE MORE OF THESE YUTZES.

AND THEY'RE REAL *WINNERS*, LET ME TELL YOU.



BAD ENOUGH WE'RE DEALING WITH STAR-- ATTEMPTED MASS MURDERER-- WE ALSO HAVE *QUANTUM*, SOME TELEPORTING CREEP WHO SNATCHES SUPER-KIDS...

...AND *OVERTIME*, A.K.A. *HECTOR BAUTISTA*-- CONVICTED MURDERER AND ESCAPED DEATH ROW INMATE.



LIKE
I SAID.

REAL
WINNERS.

Oh,
I DON'T
KNOW.

THEY
SOUND...
USEFUL.

I DON'T
TRUST
STAR.

AND I DON'T
LIKE THE IDEA OF
GIVING HER EVEN MORE
POWER THAN SHE
ALREADY HAS.

BUT I DON'T
SEE ANY WAY
AROUND IT. I'VE
GOT TOO MUCH
ON THE LINE
HERE.

TALK ABOUT
FALLING INTO A
BIT OF LUCK.

ONCE
I HAVE THESE
OTHERS WITH
ME, THEN I WON'T
HAVE TO WORRY
ABOUT THIS
FURY GUY.

THEN
I'LL HAVE THE
POWER TO DO
ANYTHING.

END
EAVESDROP.



...SO
WE'VE GOT
ONE "INFINITY
CROOK" IN
THE BAG.

LET'S
GO FIND US
ANOTHER, BOYS.
WHERE DOES FURY'S
LITTLE TOY POINT
TO, DOC?

Ugh...

A man with a beard and a green hoodie stands on a city street. He has a serious expression. In the background, there are city buildings, trees, and a dark van with its headlights on.

"GOWANUS."

HERE'S ONE
FOR YOU.

ACCORDING TO
FURY'S FILES,
BAUTISTA CAN
STOP TIME.

CAN EVEN
WIND IT
BACK TO
A CERTAIN
DEGREE.

SO HOW
DO YOU
GO AFTER
A GUY LIKE
THAT?

A close-up of the man's face. He is grimacing in pain as he is slapped. A large red handprint is visible on his cheek.

ANSWER:

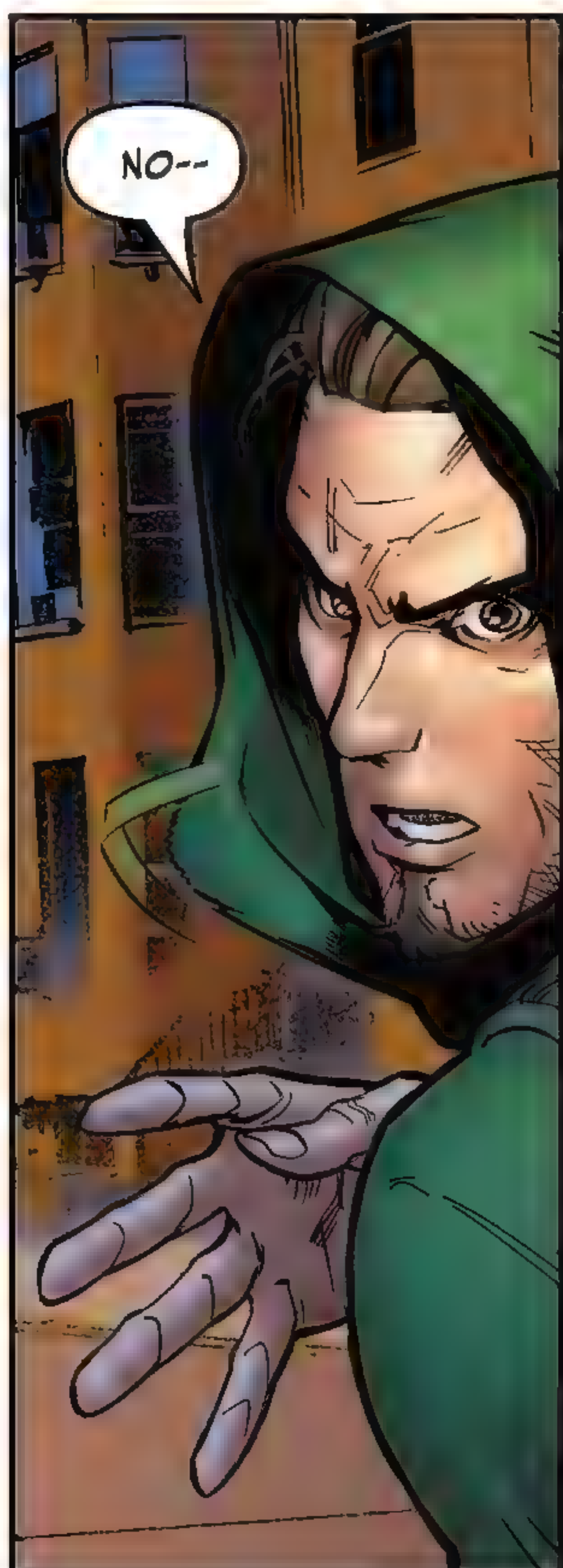
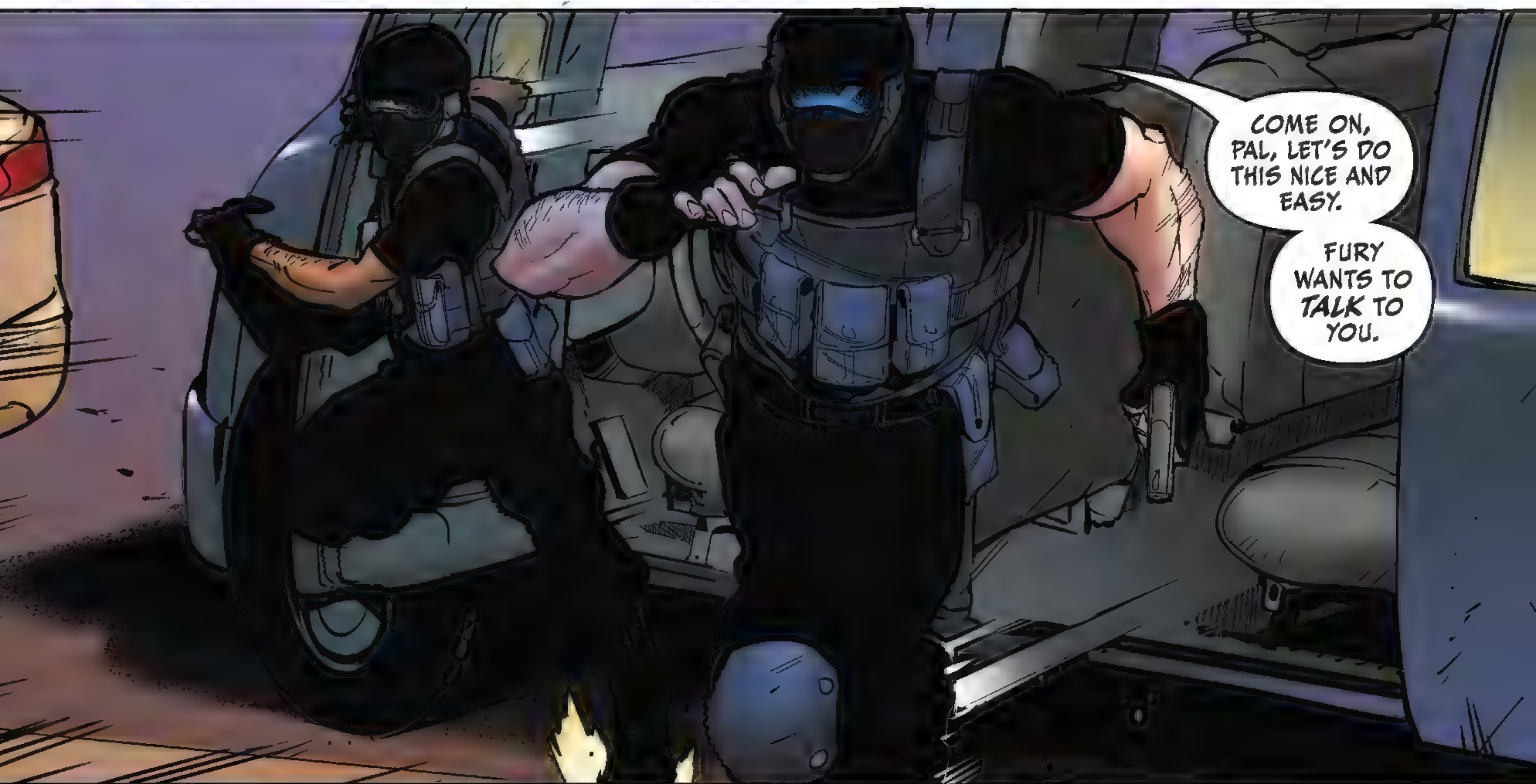
TECHUK!

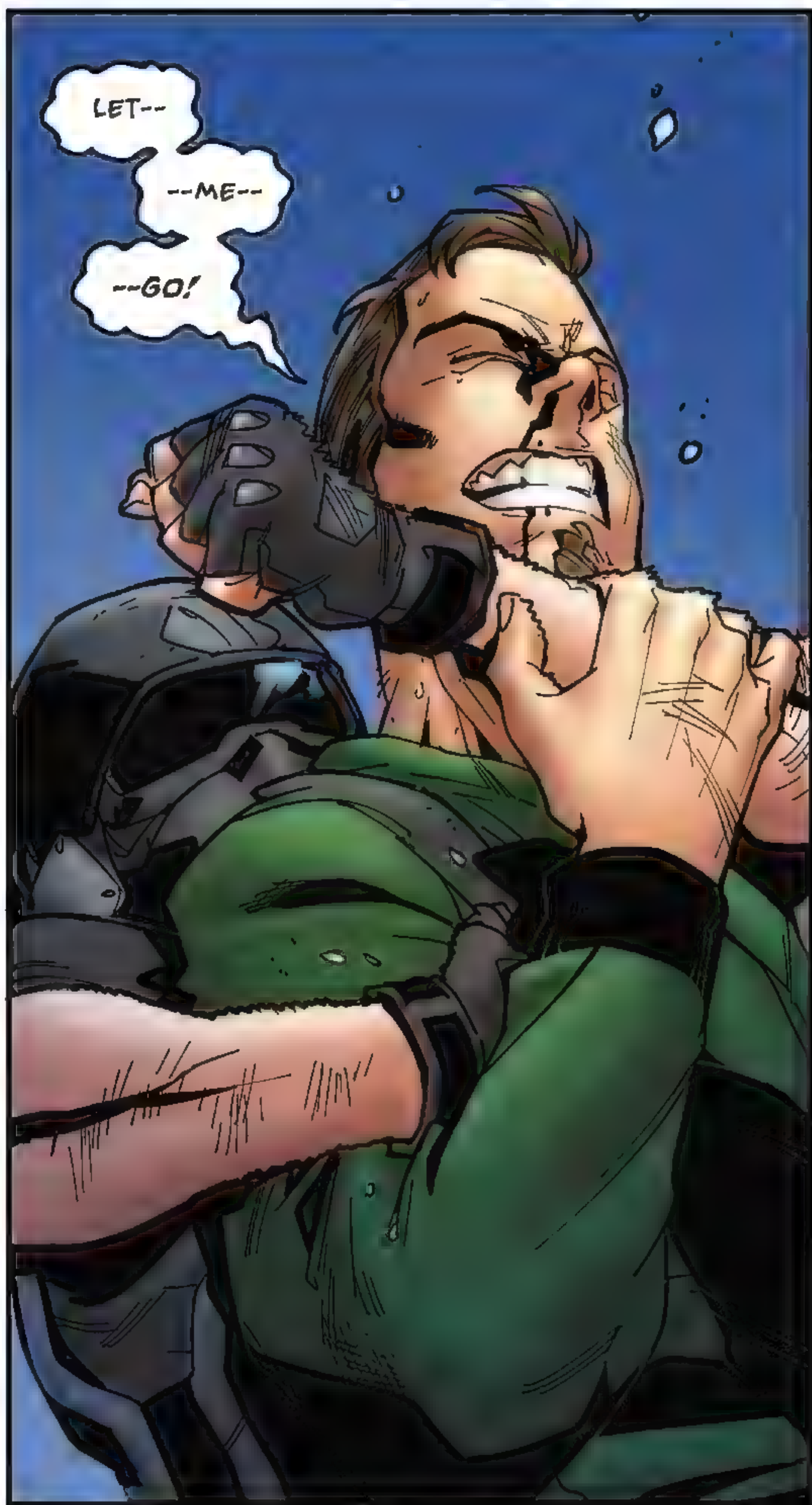
SLAP!

SAME WAY YOU GO AFTER
ANYBODY WHO'S WAY ABOVE
YOUR SUPER-POWER PAY GRADE.

The man is shown from the chest up, holding a small red object in his hand. He looks down at it with a determined expression.

WHEN
THEY'RE NOT
EXPECTING IT.









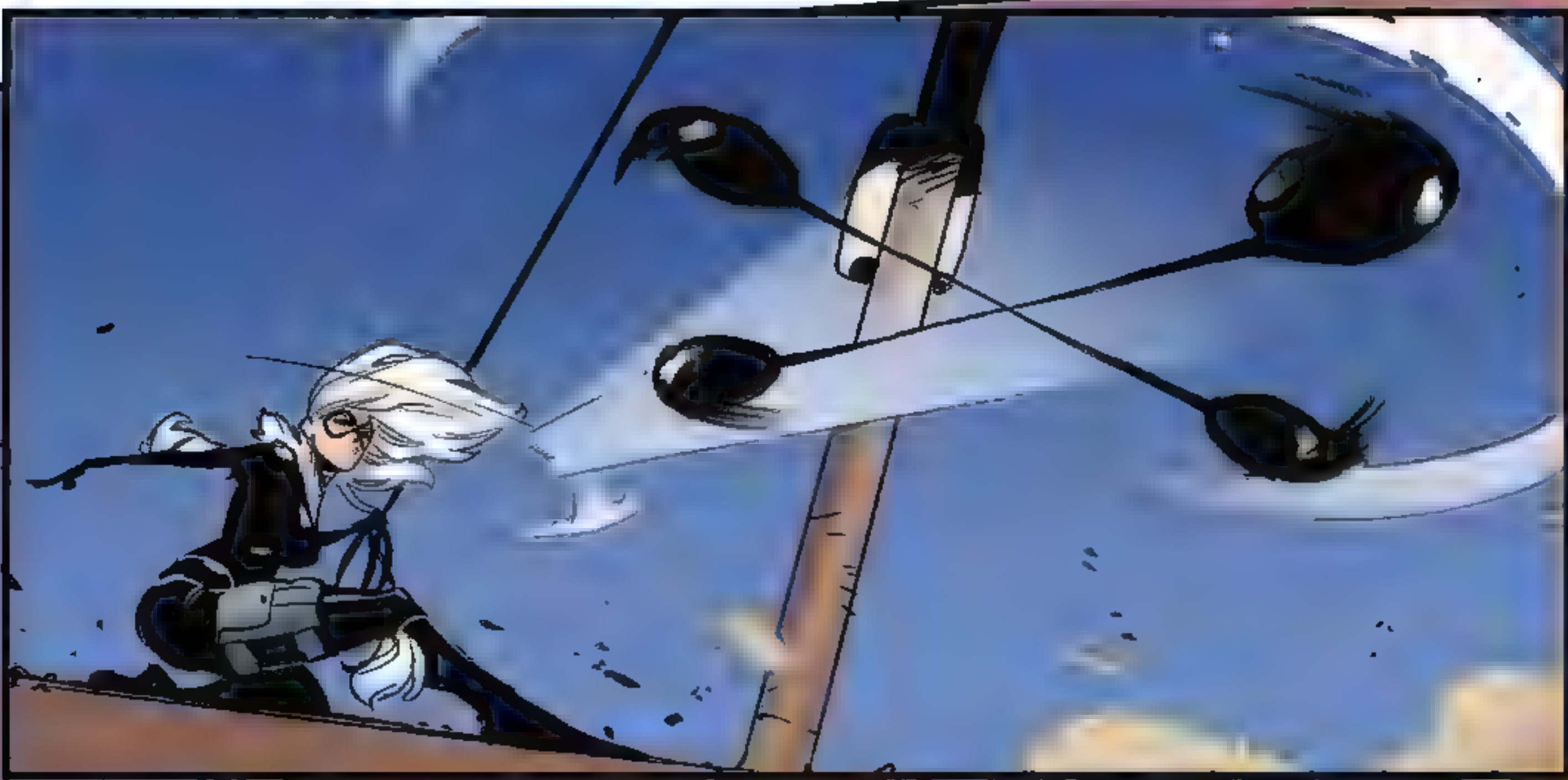
WHY...

WHY CAN'T
Y'ALL JUST
LEAVE ME
ALONE...



FURY'S
ORDERS.

YOU'RE TOO
DANGEROUS
TO BE OUT AND
ABOUT.





How about we
get out of
here?

LATER.

STOPPING
TIME.

REWRITING
REALITY.



THESE GUYS. THESE
BABY SUPER VILLAINS,
THEY'VE GOT POWER
IN SPADES.



IN FACE OF
THAT, WHAT
DO I HAVE?



WELL, A CAN-DO ATTITUDE,
A COUPLE LOYAL BOYS, A
GREAT HEAD OF HAIR AND
A SET OF LEGS THAT WON'T
QUIT, FOR STARTERS.

THAT, AND
THEATRICALITY.

FURY WAS
AFTER STAR,
SO I USED
FURY AS
LEVERAGE.

AND
WHEN FURY
WASN'T
AROUND?

WELL,
MY BOYS--
DRESSED
AS FURY'S
GOONS--
WORKED
JUST AS
WELL.



DIRTY POOL,
YOU SAY?

THE DIRTIEST.
I REPLY.

BUT I DON'T HAVE
ANY ROOM FOR
ERROR HERE. IT'S
ALL ON THE LINE FOR
ME WITH THIS JOB,
AND I NEED THESE
PEOPLE TO DO IT.

SO DIRTY
POOL OR
CLEAN...

...I'M DIVING
RIGHT IN.

WELL,
HEY THERE,
SLEEPYHEAD!





IT'S COME TO THIS.

STAR TRIED TO KILL A WHOLE PILE OF PEOPLE. OPERATIVE WORD: TRIED.

OVERTIME DID KILL SOMEONE. BUT HE'S YOUR CLASSIC HARD-LUCK CASE. I KIND OF FEEL BAD, PLAYING HIM LIKE THIS.

BUT QUANTUM? THIS GUY?

HE KIDNAPS KIDS.



I KNOW FURY'S BEEN DOGGING YOUR TRAIL. THIS WILL KEEP HIM OFF YOU.

AND ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS HELP ME OUT ONE TIME.

HE DOESN'T TALK.

MAKES MY SKIN CRAWL.

BUT I NEED HIM.

FOR NOW.



SO DO WE HAVE A DEAL?

SPIDER HAD THIS THING.

HE WAS REAL PROUD OF IT, CALLED IT HIS "SPIDER-SENSE."

IT TOLD HIM WHEN HE WAS IN DANGER.

I'LL TAKE THAT AS A YES.

I DIDN'T HAVE THE HEART TO TELL HIM THAT AFTER A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF SEASONING...

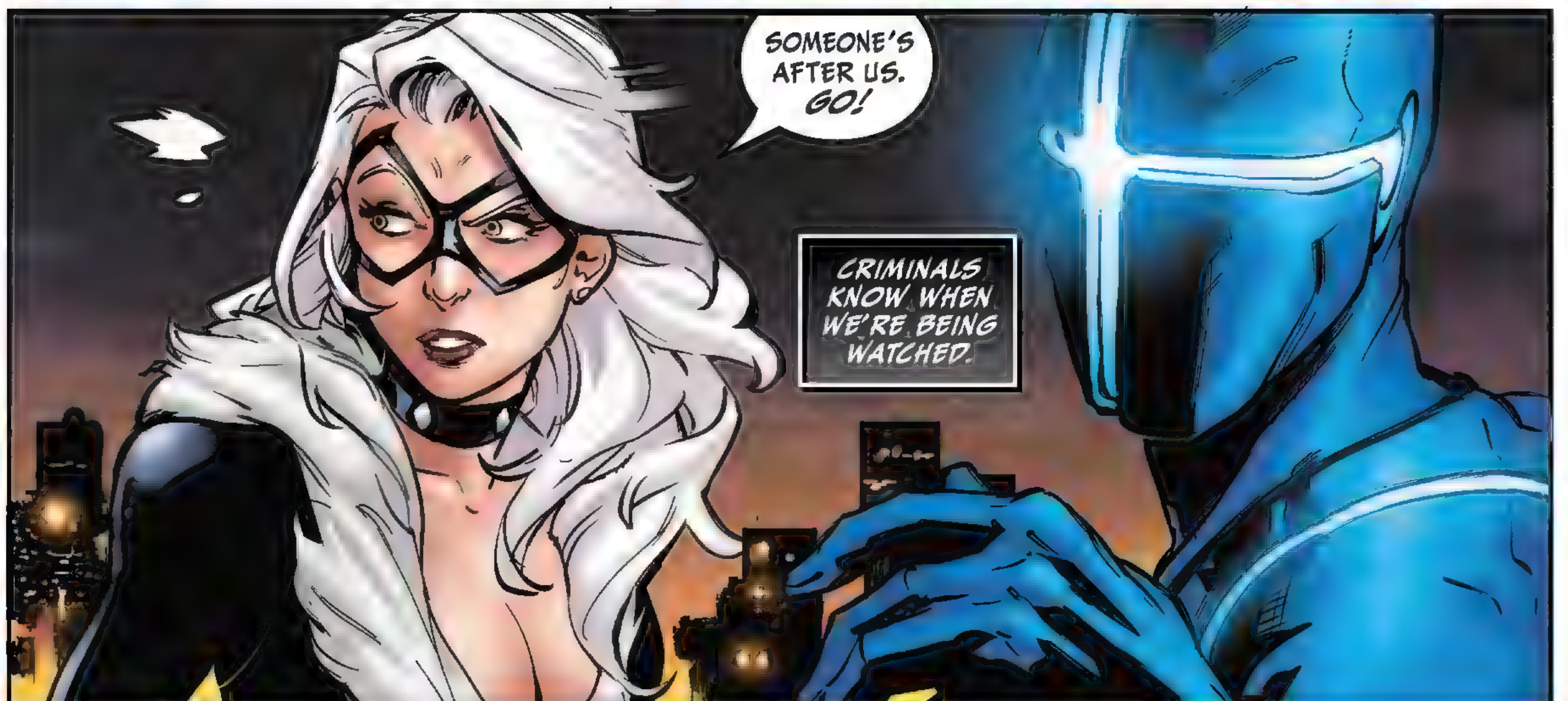


DON'T SCREW WITH ME, QUANTUM.

I'M NOT SOME TEENAGER.

BE WHERE I NEED YOU, WHEN I NEED YOU, OR I'LL--

...WE CROOKS DEVELOP THE SAME THING.



SOMEONE'S AFTER US. GO!

CRIMINALS KNOW WHEN WE'RE BEING WATCHED.

THAT'S
QUANTUM
IN.

BWOMP!

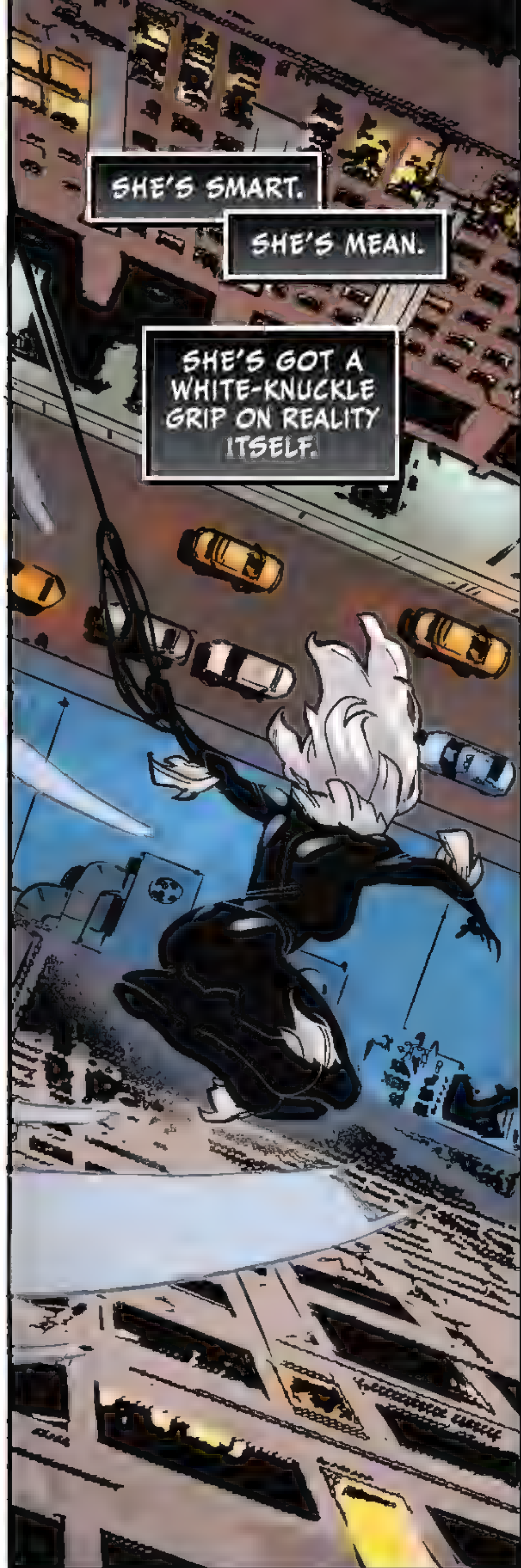
I'VE GOT
OVERTIME ON
THE HOOK.

THEY'RE NOT
THE ONES
I'M WORRIED
ABOUT
THOUGH.



NO.

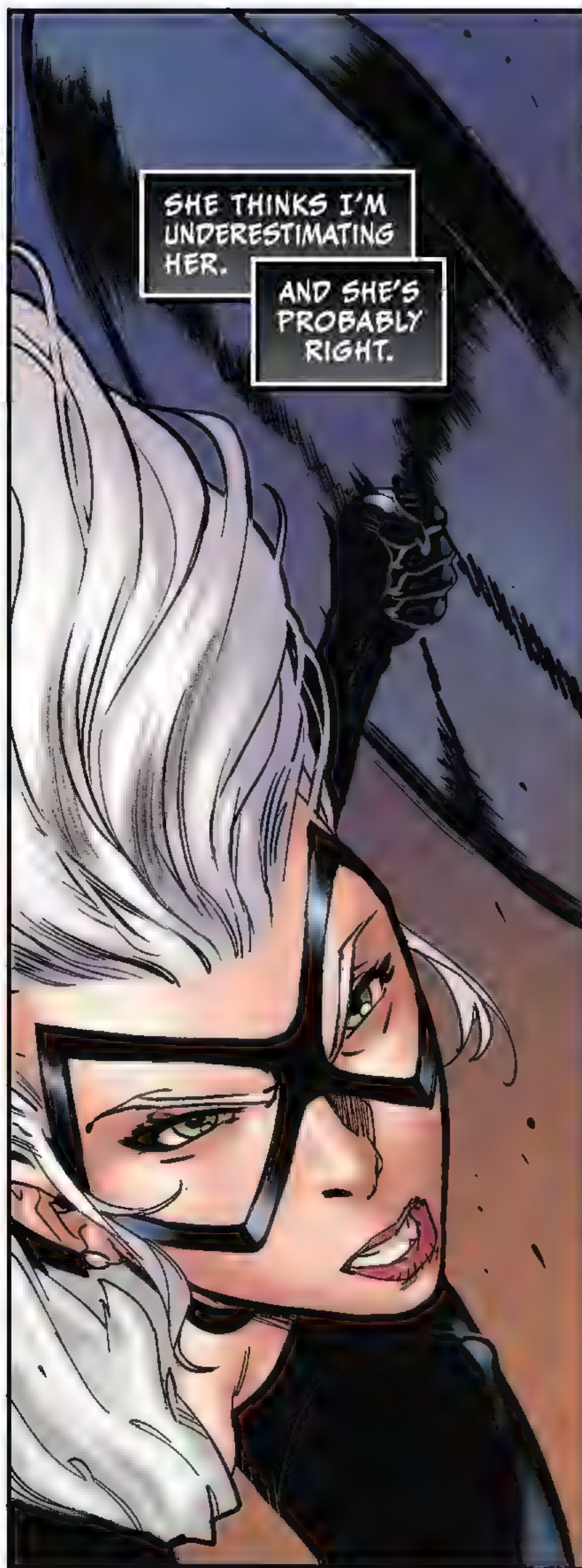
IT'S STAR.



SHE'S SMART.

SHE'S MEAN.

SHE'S GOT A
WHITE-KNUCKLE
GRIP ON REALITY
ITSELF.



SHE THINKS I'M
UNDERESTIMATING
HER.

AND SHE'S
PROBABLY
RIGHT.



PROBLEMS,
PROBLEMS.

BUT FIRST
I HAVE TO
SHAKE THIS
CHUMP.



LET'S SEE WHAT KIND
OF NERVE YOU'VE GOT, PAL.
THE GRAVEL IN YOUR GUTS.

CAN YOU SWING THROUGH
MIDTOWN TRAFFIC AT
ROUGHLY SIX INCHES
ABOVE THE ASPHALT
WITHOUT FLINCHING?

Huh.
WHOEVER
IT IS, ON
MY TAIL,
THEY'RE
GOOD.

TOO
GOOD
FOR MY
LIKING.

CLACK!

I'M TAKING THEM
THROUGH MY FAVORITE
ROUTINE, THE ROUTE
I USE WHEN I *REALLY*
WANT TO SHUCK A TAIL.

AND THEY HAVEN'T
MISSED A STEP.

IT'S LIKE
WE'RE
DANCING.

THE TWO
OF US,
FOXTROTting
ACROSS
MIDTOWN.

A CAPED
FRED TAPPING
HIS WAY AFTER
A CATSUITED
GINGER.

IT'S FUN,
AT FIRST.
A THRILL.

LIKE IT WAS WHEN
I FIRST STARTED
DOING THIS.

BUT THAT
FADES.

THEY'RE
FOLLOWING ME
TOO EASILY.

THE CHILL SETS IN, LIKE
FALLING INTO A COLD FOG.
THAT GOOSE-PIMPLE
SHUDDER OF THE FIERE.

AND THAT'S
WHEN IT GOES
WRONG.

TCHACK!





Whuff!

SPIDER-MAN
COULDN'T HAVE
FOLLOWED ME
THROUGH THAT
GAUNTLET.

HOW
DID YOU DO
THAT?

IT
WAS EASY,
FELICIA.

YOU
SHOWED
ME, YEARS
AGO.



NIGHTHAWK?!

HE'S A LONG WAY FROM D.C.

EVERY TIME I WOULD CHASE YOU, THAT ROUTE WAS HOW YOU WOULD SHAKE ME.

EVERY TIME, EXCEPT FOR THE NIGHT I *CAUGHT* YOU. OR DID YOU CATCH ME?

THAT WAS WHEN IT BEGAN. "THE HAWK AND THE CAT."



TALK SENSE.

Hh.



OF COURSE YOU DON'T REMEMBER.

YOU DON'T REMEMBER ME. REMEMBER US.

IT WAS TAKEN FROM US, FELICIA. THE *WHOLE WORLD* WAS TAKEN FROM US. A *BETTER WORLD*. ONE THAT MADE *SENSE*.*

WHAT, IS THIS SOME "COSMIC" SHENANIGANS? I'M A CROOK, BIRDMAN, I DON'T GO IN FOR THAT.

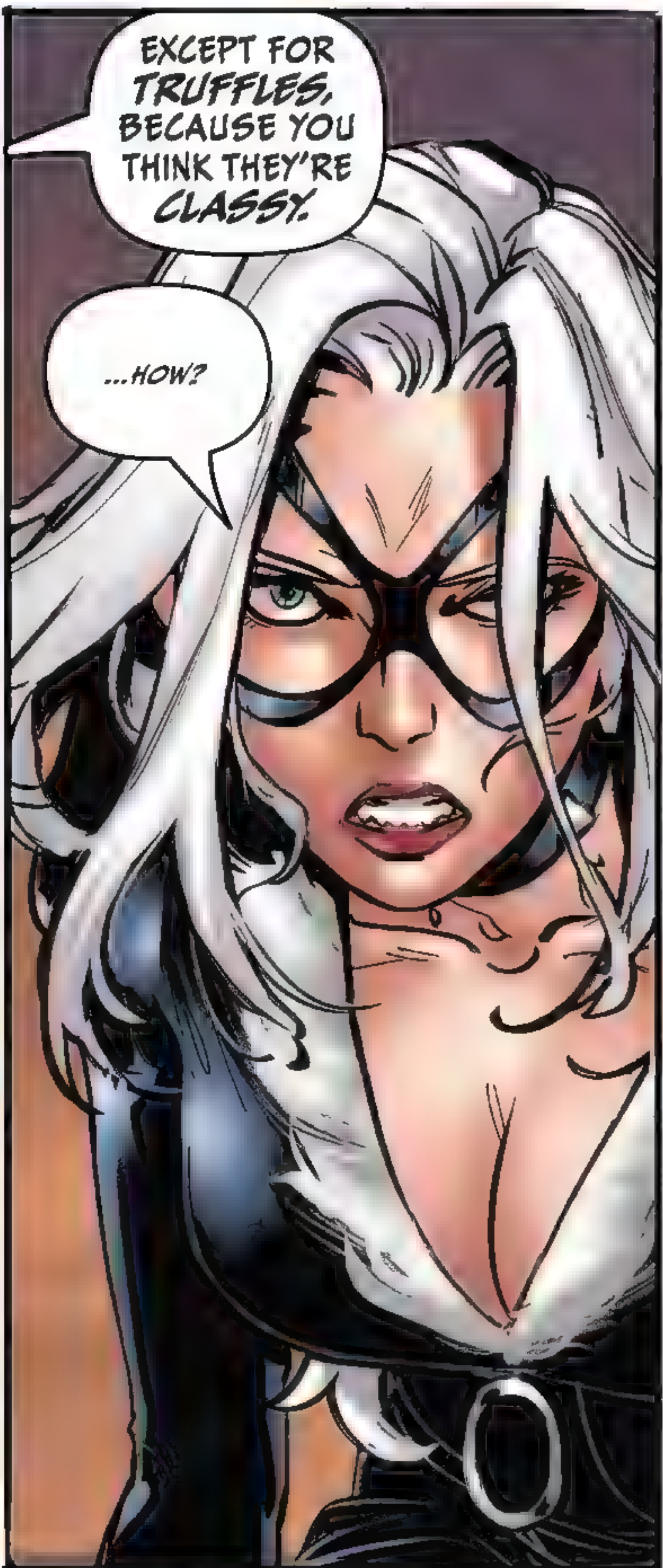
*HAWK IS REFERRING TO THE RECENT HEROES REBORN SERIES. -NL



YOUR NAME IS FELICIA SARA HARDY. YOUR MOTHER'S NAME WAS LYDIA, AND YOUR FATHER'S NAME WAS WALTER.

YOU LIKE '60s TELEVISION AND '80s MUSIC. YOU LIVE ON TRASH TAKEOUT AND EXPENSIVE CHAMPAGNE.

YOU TELL PEOPLE THAT YOU'RE ALLERGIC TO MUSHROOMS, BUT REALLY, YOU JUST DON'T LIKE THEM.



EXCEPT FOR TRUFFLES, BECAUSE YOU THINK THEY'RE *CLASSY*.

...HOW?



IN MY WORLD, YOU **TOLD** ME. WE WERE...VERY CLOSE. BUT YOU DON'T REMEMBER THAT WORLD.

ALMOST NO ONE DOES. BUT I DO.

AND I WANT IT **BACK.**

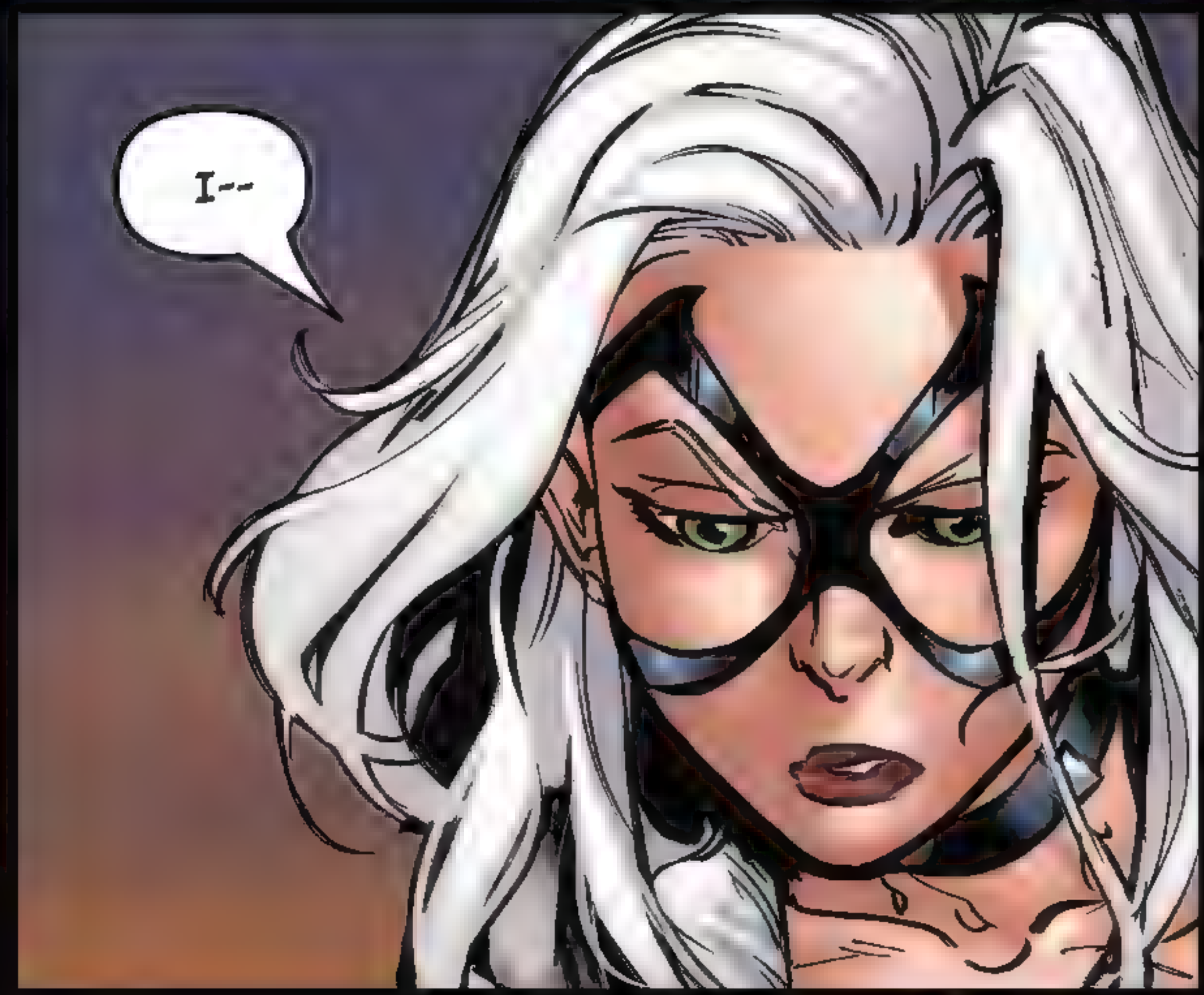
I WANT TO PAPER OVER **THIS** FLAWED, BROKEN, FLY-BLOWN CORPSE OF A WORLD WITH SOMETHING **BETTER.**



BUT I CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT **YOU.**

I TOLD YOU THAT A WORLD WAS TAKEN FROM US.

WHO BETTER THAN THE BLACK CAT TO **STEAL** IT BACK?



I--



THE INFINITY **STONES.**

YOU WANT TO USE THOSE IDIOTS TO REBUILD THE WORLD.

AND YOU KNOW I'VE BEEN COLLECTING THEM.



"GIVE ME A LEVER LONG ENOUGH AND A FULCRUM ON WHICH TO PLACE IT, AND I SHALL MOVE THE WORLD," SAID ARCHIMEDES.

I DON'T WANT TO **MOVE** THE WORLD. I WANT TO **FLIP** IT LIKE A COIN.

THAT REQUIRES A **VERY LONG LEVER.** AND THE INFINITY STONES ARE AS **LONG** AS THEY GET.

YOU KNOW
THIS WORLD ISN'T
RIGHT. YOU KNOW YOU
DON'T FIT IN HERE.
NOT ANY MORE
THAN I DO.

YOU KNOW
THE WORLD CAN
BE BETTER.

YOU AND I--
WE WERE **HAPPY**
THERE. WE CAN
BRING THAT WORLD
BACK.

YOUR **BLACK
CAT** TRADING
CARD STATS
WERE PRETTY
GOOD.

I **DO** LIE ABOUT
BEING ALLERGIC TO
MUSHROOMS. ALWAYS
HAVE, SINCE I WAS A
KID. AND I'VE NEVER
TOLD ANYONE THE
TRUTH.

IT'S
EMBARRASSING.

BUT
YOU SAID
MY MOM'S
NAME WAS
LYDIA.

IN **THIS** WORLD,
MY MOM IS ALIVE.
AND THAT'S THE
WAY I LIKE IT.

SO SHOVE
YOUR "BETTER
WORLD."

WELL,
HEY THERE,
FELICIA!

WHOPWHOPWHOPWHOPWHOP

I TOLD YOU
THIS WASN'T
OVER, DIDN'T
I?

FURY.

Ahhh,
NUTS.

AND
NIGHTHAWK
TOO?!

DAMN,
I GUESS A
MAN REALLY
CAN HAVE
IT ALL!

LIGHT
'EM UP!

BUDDABUDDA
BUDDABUDDA!





WHAT A SORE LOSER.



...AND HE GOES AND TAKES IT PERSONALLY.



WELL, CHEESE COULSON SPENT A LOT OF TAXPAYER MONEY MAKING YOU THINK THAT.



"FACT
OF THE
MATTER IS:

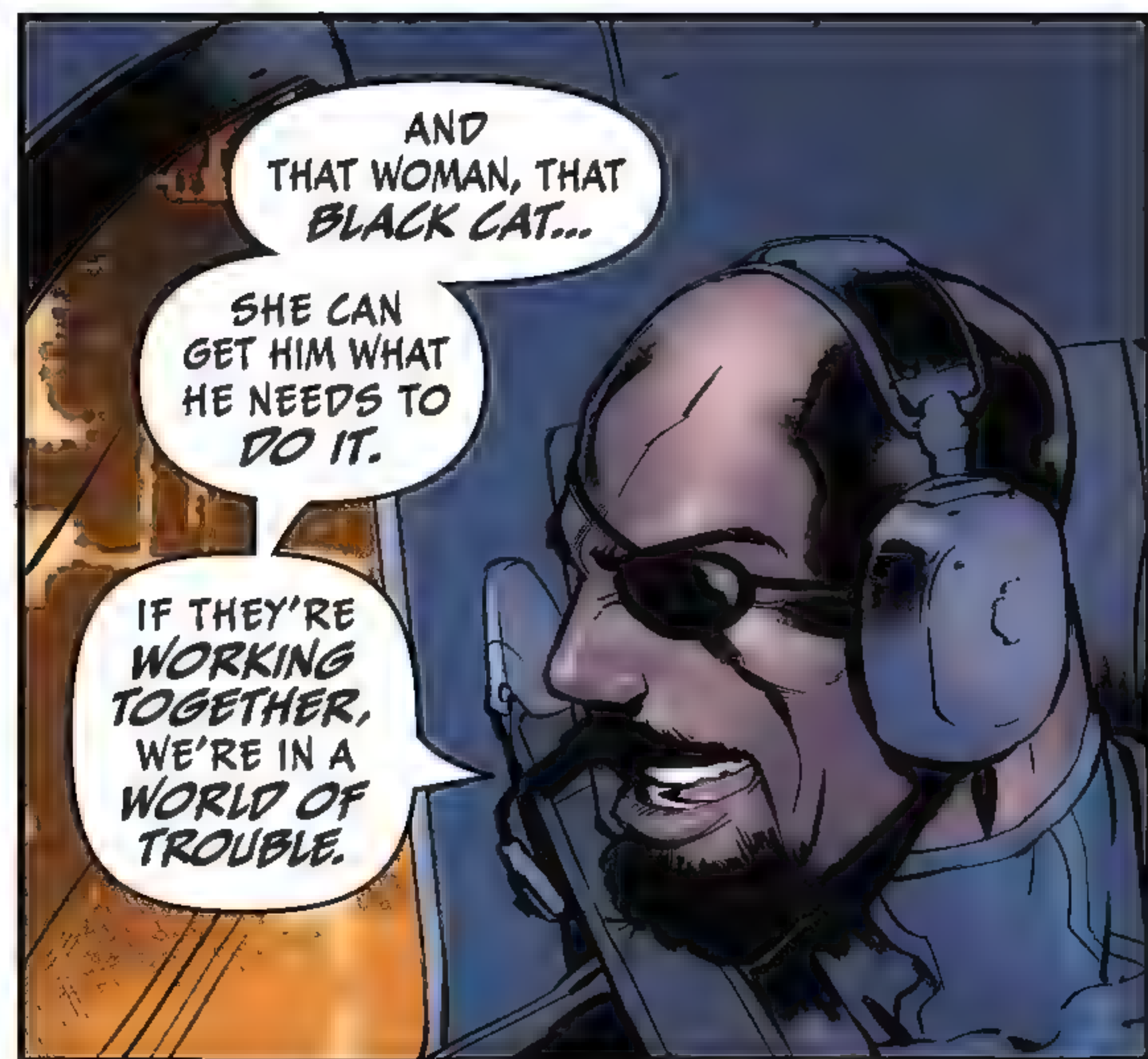
"NIGHTHAWK
WANTS TO
USE COSMIC
POWERS TO
REBUILD THE
WORLD.



"NOW, THERE'S
LOTS I DON'T
LIKE ABOUT
THIS WORLD
OF OURS—

"—I MEAN, CAN'T
THE FALCONS WIN
AT LEAST ONE
SUPER BOWL?

"BUT I'LL TAKE THE
DEVIL I KNOW. THANK
YOU VERY MUCH."



AND
THAT WOMAN, THAT
BLACK CAT...

SHE CAN
GET HIM WHAT
HE NEEDS TO
DO IT.

IF THEY'RE
WORKING
TOGETHER,
WE'RE IN A
WORLD OF
TROUBLE.



SO GET HER WITH A DART,
BEFORE WE ALL WAKE UP LIVING
IN THE UNITED STATES OF
NIGHTHAWK OR SOME
DAMN THING.

DAMN FURY.

DAMN
NIGHTHAWK.

DAMN
EVERYONE
WHO WANTS
TO TELL ME
HOW TO LIVE
MY LIFE.

AND DAMN ME
FOR TAKING
THE TIGER
BY THE TAIL.

INFINITY STONES.

WHAT WAS
I THINKING.

DUMB
QUESTION.

I WASN'T
THINKING.

THINKING IS FOR
SOMEONE WITH
OPTIONS.
OPTIONS I
DON'T HAVE.

STAND
DOWN!

I SAW THE STONES
ONCE, IN A VISION.

ASGARDIAN
MAGIC, TRYING
TO TEMPT ME
WITH POWER.

IT WASN'T
REAL.

ABORT,
DAMMIT!

ABORT!

SIR?

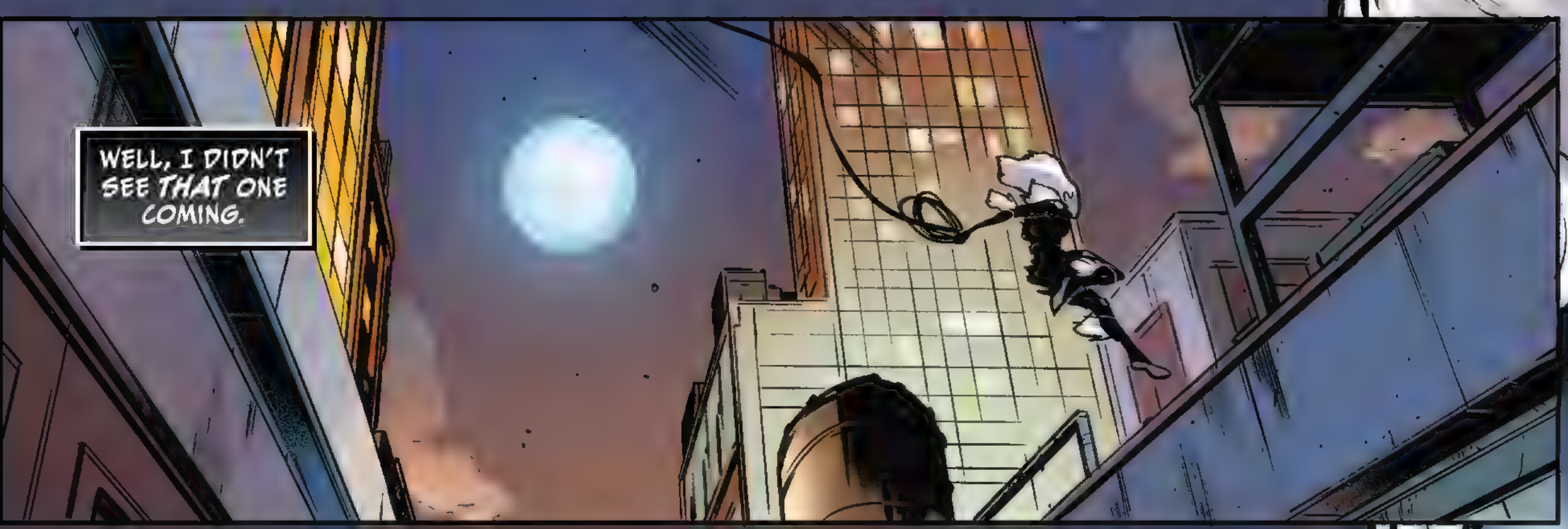
BEFORE
THEY SHOOT
US OUT OF
THE SKY!

BUT IT PUT THE
BUG IN MY EAR.

???

...WHAT THE
HELL?!

FURY'S
TURNING
TAIL?



WELL, I DIDN'T
SEE THAT ONE
COMING.



YOU'RE
WELCOME,
FELICIA.

ODESSA.

YOU
MADE FURY
BACK OFF?

A MAN IN A
HELICOPTER
CAN FEEL
INVINCIBLE.

AN
FIM-92
STINGER
MISSILE
REMINDS HIM
THAT HE IS
NOT.

FURY IS
DANGEROUS,
FELICIA. THIS
BUSINESS
OF YOURS IS
DANGEROUS.



DON'T
WORRY
ABOUT
FURY--

I AM
NOT WORRIED
ABOUT FURY.
I'M WORRIED
ABOUT YOU.



Oh, NOW YOU'RE
WORRIED ABOUT ME?
I WOULDN'T HAVE TO DO
ANY OF THIS IF YOU
WOULD HELP ME.

YOU HAVE
THE POWER
TO FIX ALL
OF THIS.

BUT YOU

JUST

WON'T.



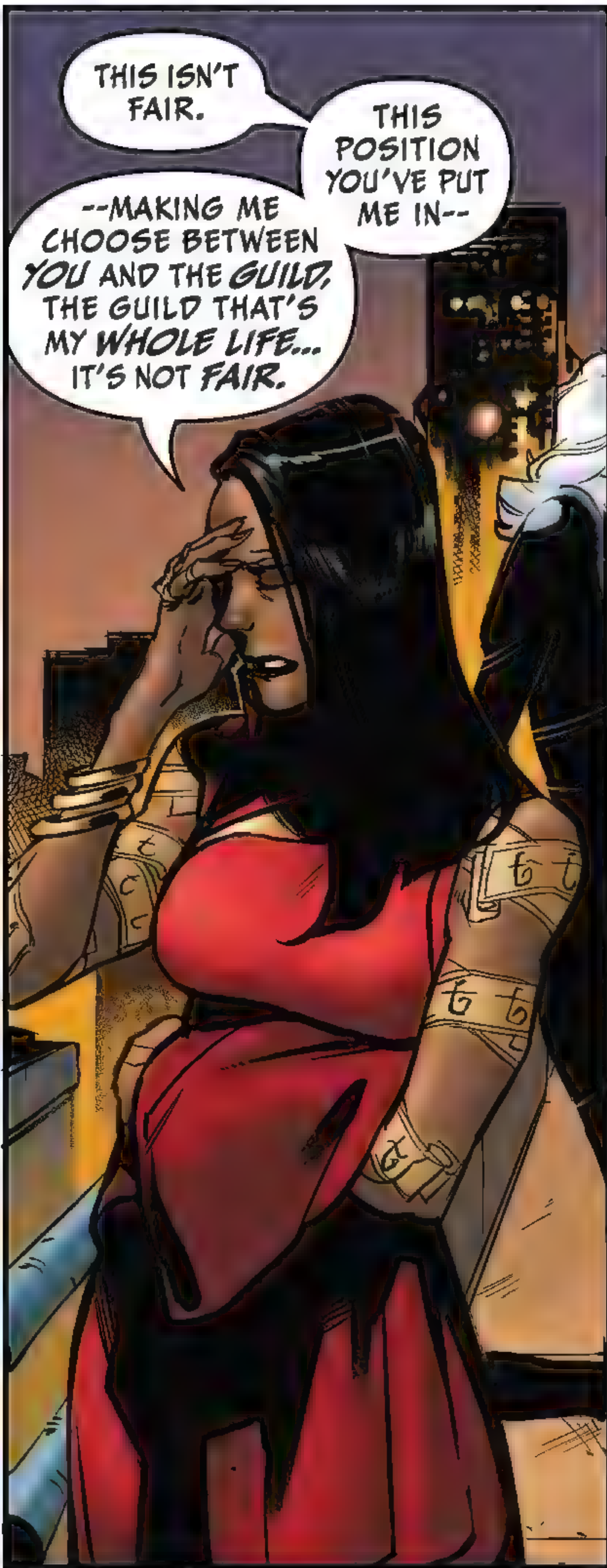
HAVEN'T
I BROKEN
ENOUGH OF
MY RULES
FOR YOU?

BY
GUILD LAW
YOU SHOULD
BE DEAD FOR
ALL YOU'VE
DONE TO
US.



YEAH
WELL...*GIVE*
ME TIME.

I MIGHT
GET THERE
YET.



THIS ISN'T
FAIR.

--MAKING ME
CHOOSE BETWEEN
YOU AND THE GUILD,
THE GUILD THAT'S
MY *WHOLE* LIFE...
IT'S NOT FAIR.

THIS
POSITION
YOU'VE PUT
ME IN--



AND
THE POSITION
I'M IN, IS *THAT*
FAIR?

HEY.



WHEN
HAS LIFE
EVER BEEN
FAIR...

...FOR
EITHER
OF US?!





TOMORROW,
ODESSA.

I JUST
NEED TO TO
HOLD ALL THIS
TOGETHER UNTIL
I DO THE JOB
TOMORROW, AND
THEN THAT'S
THE **END OF**
IT.

*Tut,
tut.*

THAT'S WHERE
YOU'RE **WRONG**,
BLACK CAT.

TOMORROW'S
JUST GOING TO BE
THE **BEGINNING.**



GIANT-SIZE BLACK CAT: INFINITY SCORE PART 4

RIGHT NOW.

HERE'S THE THING ABOUT GETTING INTO PLACES YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE:

MOST PEOPLE DON'T CARE.

NOT UNTIL YOU GIVE THEM A REASON TO.

SURE, IF A COUPLE OF LADY SUPER-CROOKS COME TEARING IN, HELL-FOR-LEATHER IN THEIR FULL SUPER-TOGS?

PEOPLE ARE GOING TO NOTICE. PEOPLE ARE GOING TO KICK UP A STINK. PEOPLE ARE GOING TO CALL THE COPS.

BUT A HOSPITAL'S A BUSY PLACE. YOU LOOK LIKE YOU FIT IN, THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR MOST.

PEOPLE HAVE THINGS TO DO. LIFE-OR-DEATH THINGS.

AND WHEN THEY'RE NOT DOING THOSE LIFE-OR-DEATH THINGS, THEY'RE TIRED.

LIFE-OR-DEATH TAKES IT OUT OF YOU. BELIEVE ME, I'VE BEEN THERE.

I AM THERE.

THE NIGHT BEFORE.



WAIT,
THAT'S
IT?

THAT'S IT.
SCRUBS, TWO PAIRS.
SURGICAL MASK
AND CAP, TWO SETS.
I.D. CARDS, FORGED.
BINGO BONGO.

I THOUGHT
YOU WERE SOME KIND
OF *SUPER* THIEF.

I THOUGHT WE'D
WALK THROUGH WALLS, HAVE
INVISIBILITY SUITS, SOMETHING
LIKE THAT. SOMETHING *SEXY*.



LIKE,
WHERE'S THE
TRICKS? THE
GADGETS?

YOU KNOW,
BEYOND THIS
*PENDANT
GIZMO* YOU
GAVE ME.



THE
GADGET?

YOU SEE
HER EVERY
DAY IN THE
MIRROR,
STAR.

IT'S A
HOSPITAL,
NOT FORT KNOX.
GETTING IN AND
OUT IS THE
EASY PART.

IT'S THE
MIRACLE
THAT'S
THE TRICK,
AND YOU'RE
THE ONE
HANDING IT
OUT ON THIS
GIG.



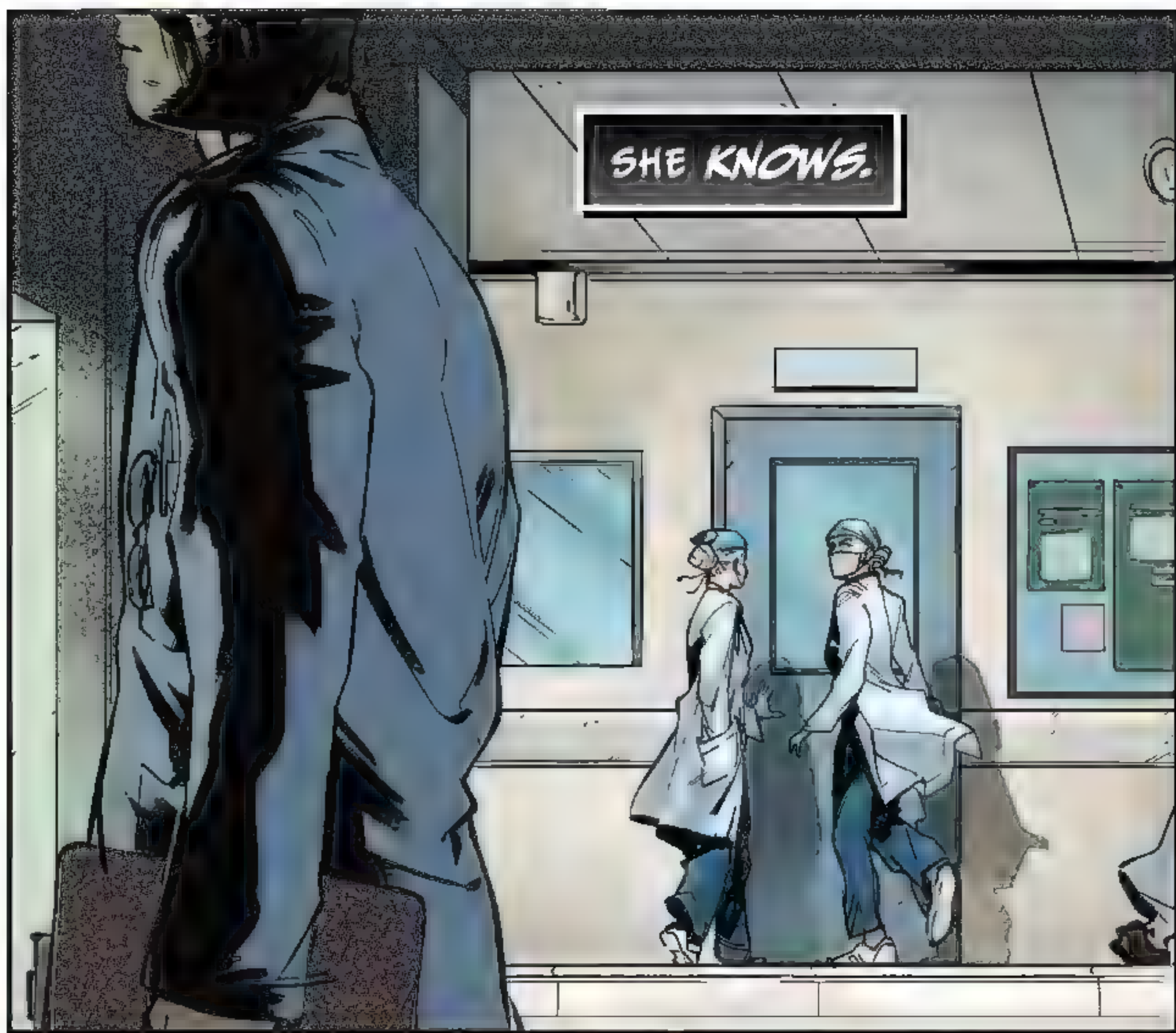
YEAH,
SURE.

YOU
FIGURE OUT
HOW YOU'RE
GOING TO
JUICE MY
POWERS?

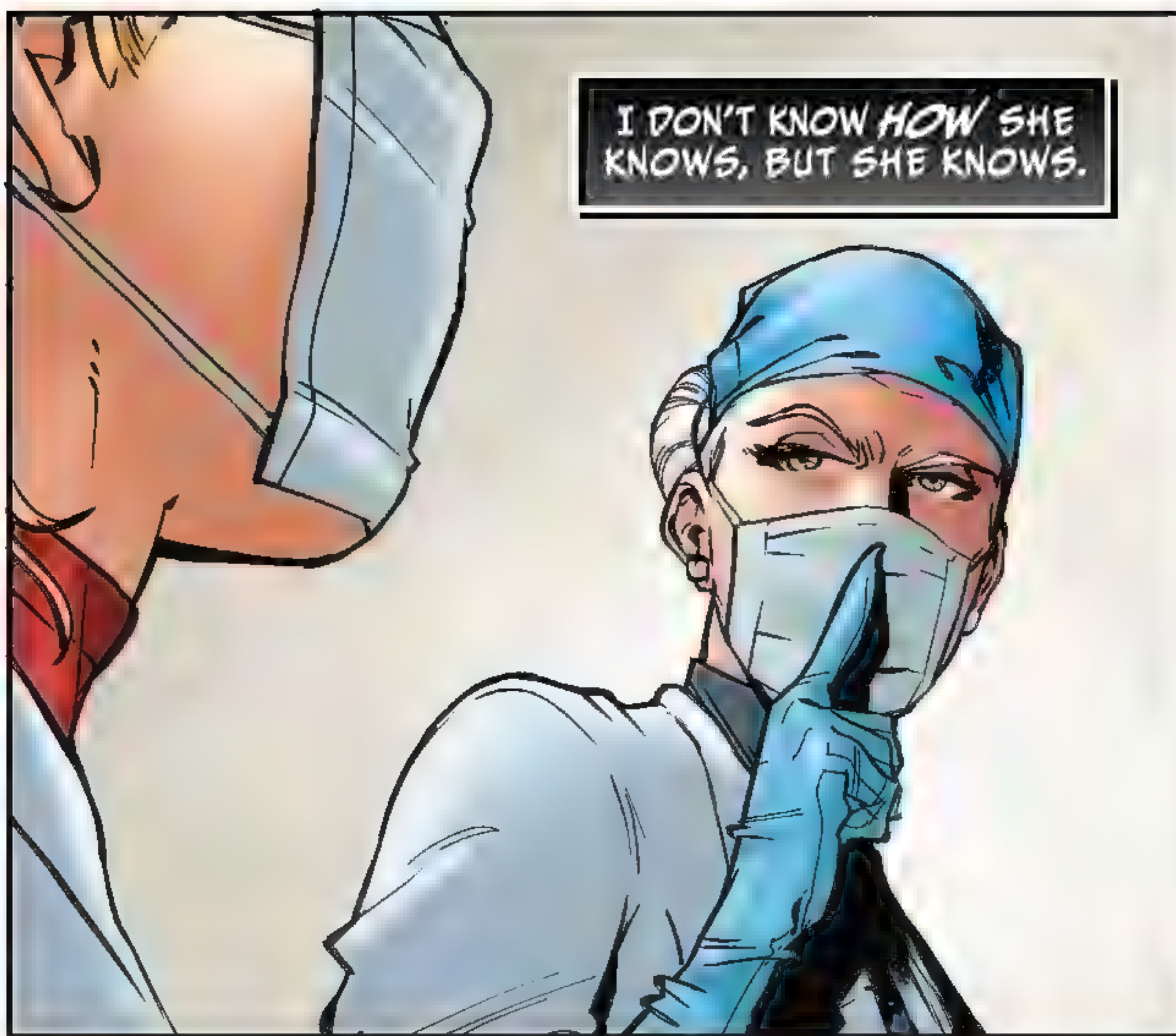


Oh,
YOU BETTER
BELIEVE
I DID.

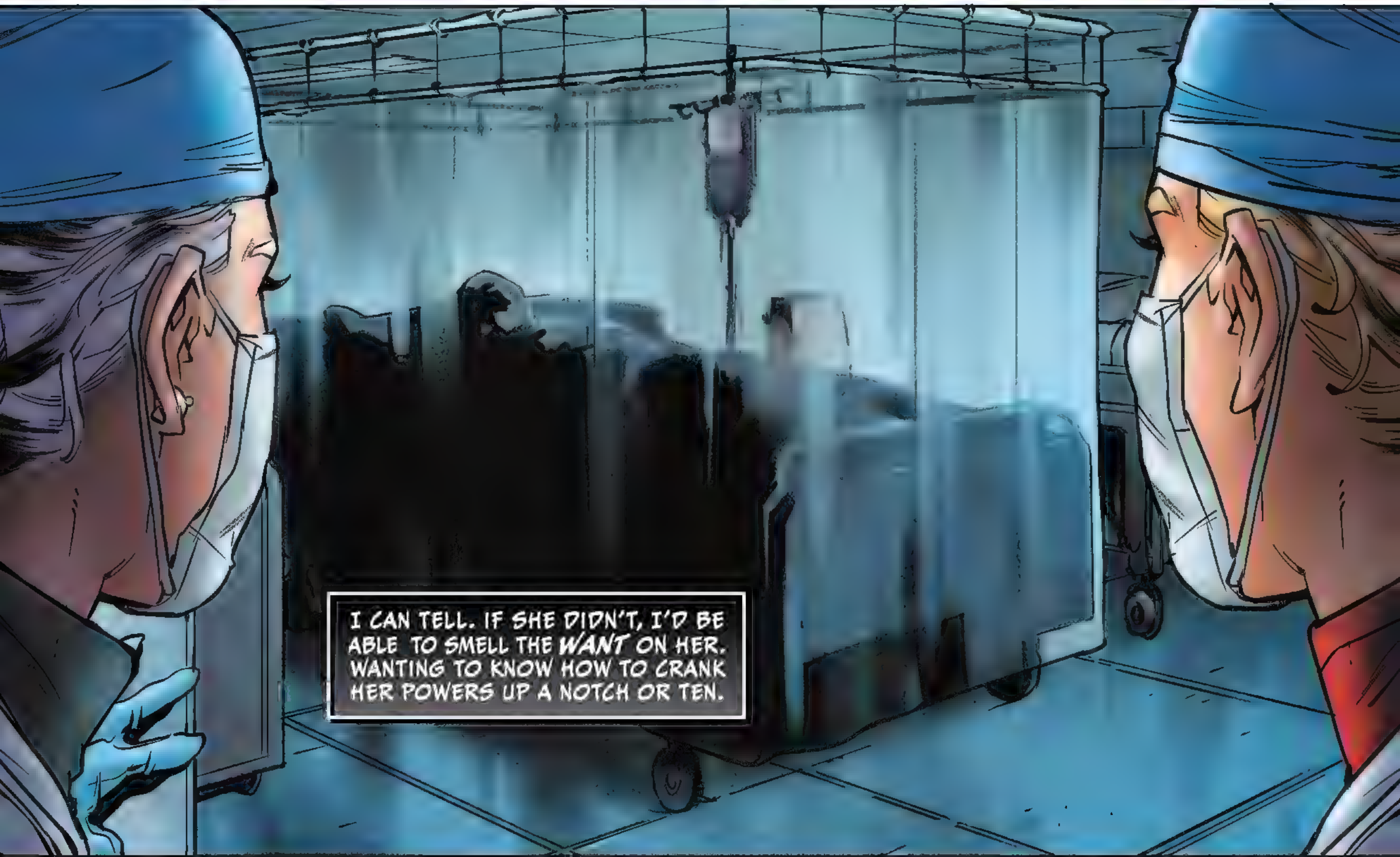
...AND ARE
YOU GOING TO
SHARE WITH THE
REST OF THE
CLASS?



SHE KNOWS.



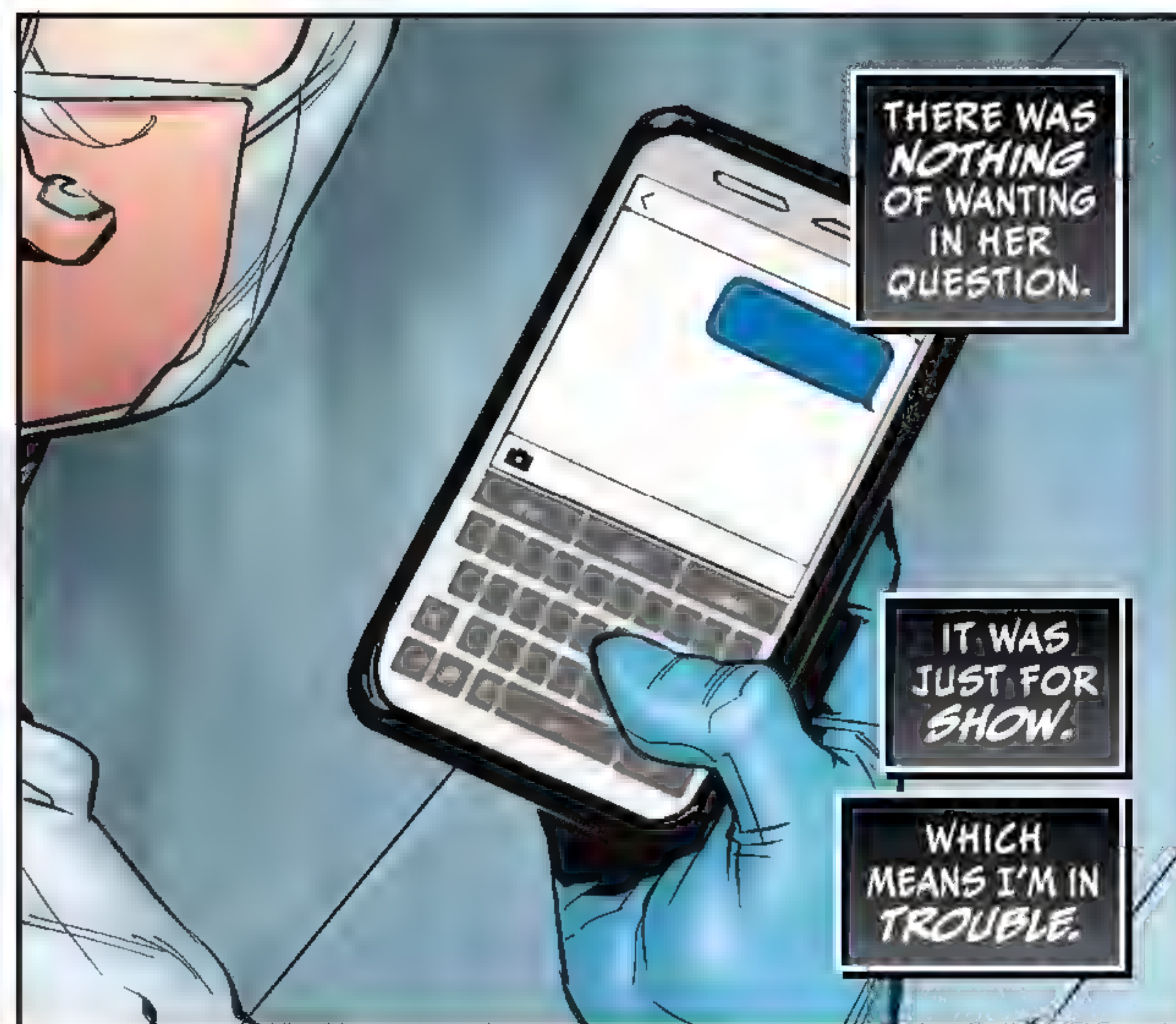
I DON'T KNOW HOW SHE KNOWS, BUT SHE KNOWS.



I CAN TELL. IF SHE DIDN'T, I'D BE ABLE TO SMELL THE WANT ON HER. WANTING TO KNOW HOW TO CRANK HER POWERS UP A NOTCH OR TEN.



I'M GOOD AT THAT. KNOWING WHAT PEOPLE WANT.



THERE WAS NOTHING OF WANTING IN HER QUESTION.

IT WAS JUST FOR SHOW.

WHICH MEANS I'M IN TROUBLE.

BUT I CAN'T WORRY ABOUT THAT RIGHT NOW.

NOW I'M CALLING IN THE HIRED HELP.

"YOUR GUYS ARE JUST GUYS," PEOPLE TELL ME.

"WHY NOT CREW UP WITH SOME SUPER-CROOKS?"

IT'S A GOOD QUESTION.

MY BOYS ARE PLUCKY. THEY'VE GOT PLUCK FOR DAYS.

BUT THEY CAN'T STOP TIME.

THEY CAN'T TELEPORT ACROSS SPACE.

THEY'RE NOT POWERED BY GEWGAW'S OF COSMIC IMPORT.

BUT HEY, YOU THINK I TRUST THESE TWO IDIOTS? OVERTIME AND QUANTUM?

OR THE THIRD DEFINITELY-NOT-AN-IDIOT STANDING BESIDE ME?

I'LL USE THEM IF I'VE GOT TO--

--AND I'VE GOT TO--

--BUT I'LL TAKE A COUPLE OF EX-CONS WHO HAVE MY BACK OVER INFINITY STONES ANY DAY.

BWOMP!

I'VE ONLY GOT
THREE OUT OF SIX.

WOWWWW!

BUT IN THIS CASE,
FIFTY PERCENT
BETTER BE A
PASSING GRADE.

FAAASH!

BECAUSE I
CAN'T AFFORD
TO FAIL.

BWOMP!

AND
BESIDES--

I DIDN'T
KNOW IT WOULD
FEEL LIKE
THIS.

MY BLOOD
IS ON FIRE.
MY HEART'S
AN--AN--

--AN
ACTUAL
STAR--

--ANY MORE
THAN THREE
AND I'D BE
AFRAID OF
LEVELING
THE CITY.

DO IT.

CANCER?

GOD.

I COULD
MOVE PLANETS
RIGHT NOW. A FEW
ROGUE CELLS?
COME ON.

BUT SURE,
LET'S KEEP THIS
STUPID CHARADE
GOING A LITTLE
LONGER.

HEAL!

CLAP!



IMAGINE.

YOU CLAP
YOUR HANDS.
JUST CLAP THEM
TOGETHER.
NO BIG DEAL.

AND AS A RESULT,
SOMEONE WHO WAS
GOING TO DIE...

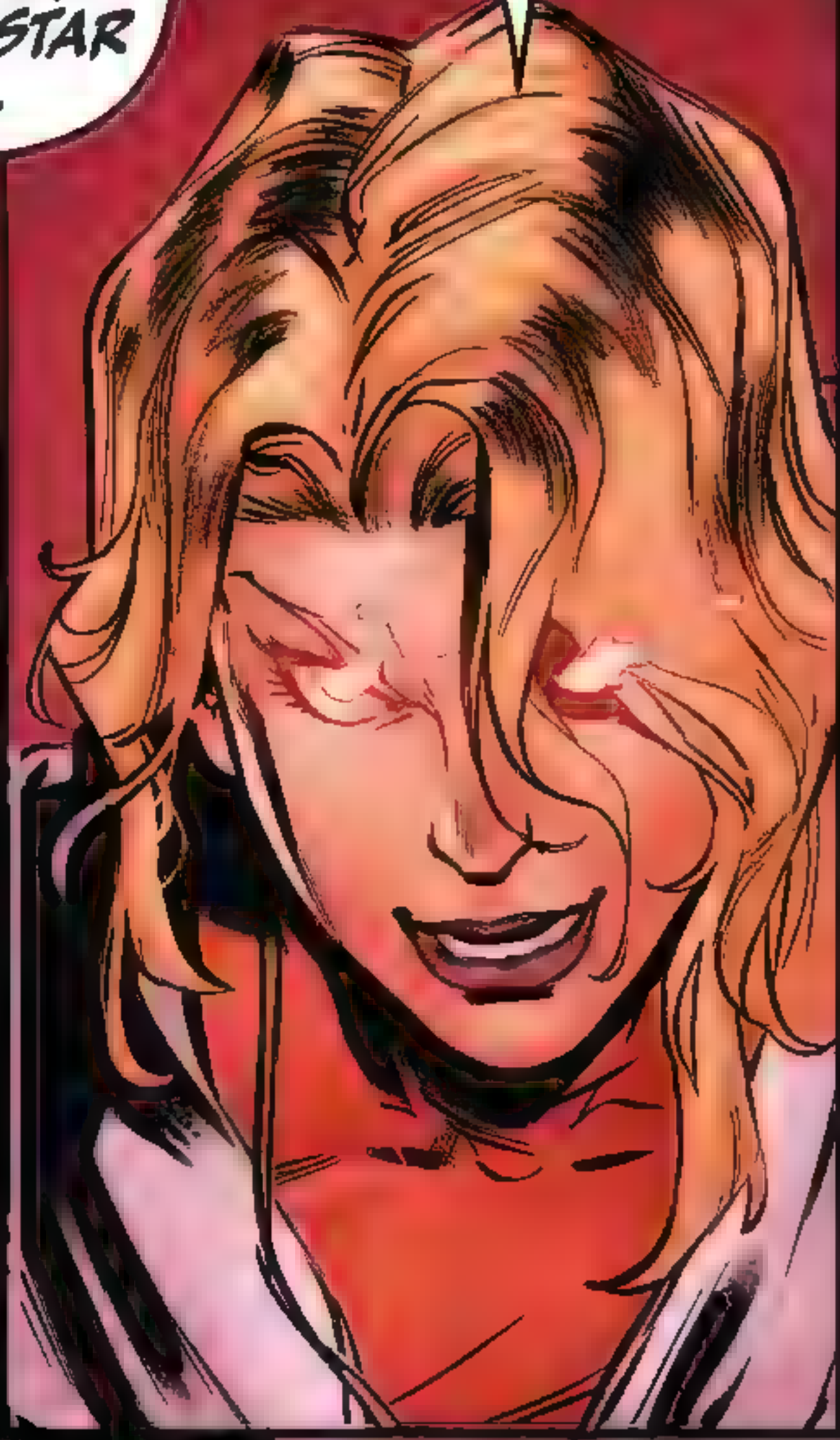


...DOESN'T.

DONE.
CANCER'S ALL
GONE.

YOU'RE CLEAN,
DR. RAPPAZZINI.
AND YOU CAN TELL
DOCTOR DOOM
THAT HE OWES STAR
A FAVOR.

AND YOU, MISS
FELICIA HARDY, MISS
OH-SO-CLEVER...





...YOU'RE GOING TO TELL ME HOW TO FIND THE OTHERS. ALL OF THEM.

BECAUSE YOU KNOW *WHAT*? MAYBE I DON'T WANT TO BE A REAL SUPER VILLAIN, AFTER ALL.

AGH!

I THINK I JUST MIGHT BECOME GOD.

...FELICIA?



AH, NUTS.



...HI, MOM.



FOX?

ARE YOU
HERE?



Of course
I am, darling.

Where
ELSE would
I be?

NO ONE
escapes the
vaults.

No one
except the
BLACK CAT, of
course.

Not even
the wily old fox
who loved her.

Who gave her
EVERYTHING
she could
ever want.

BUT
DON'T WORRY,
DARLING.

I'LL BE
WAITING FOR
YOU HERE.

I'LL BE
WAITING FOR
AS LONG AS
IT TAKES.



"AS LONG AS
IT TAKES."

TWO MONTHS AGO.

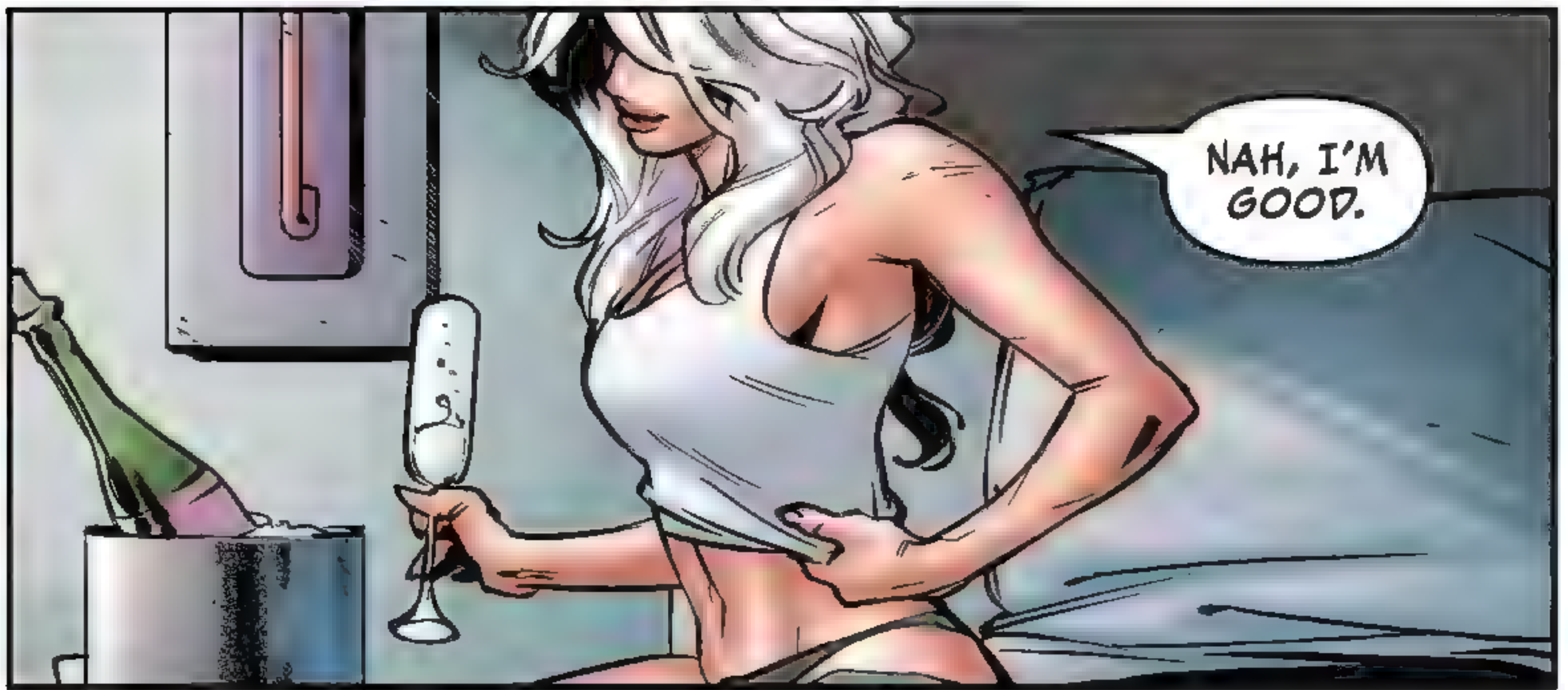
Ugh...



IT'S
SCANDALOUS
HOW LATE YOU
SLEEP.

WHAT
CAN I SAY?
I LIKE TO
INDULGE
MYSELF.

Hmmm.
YOU DO
INDEED.
COFFEE?



NAH, I'M
GOOD.



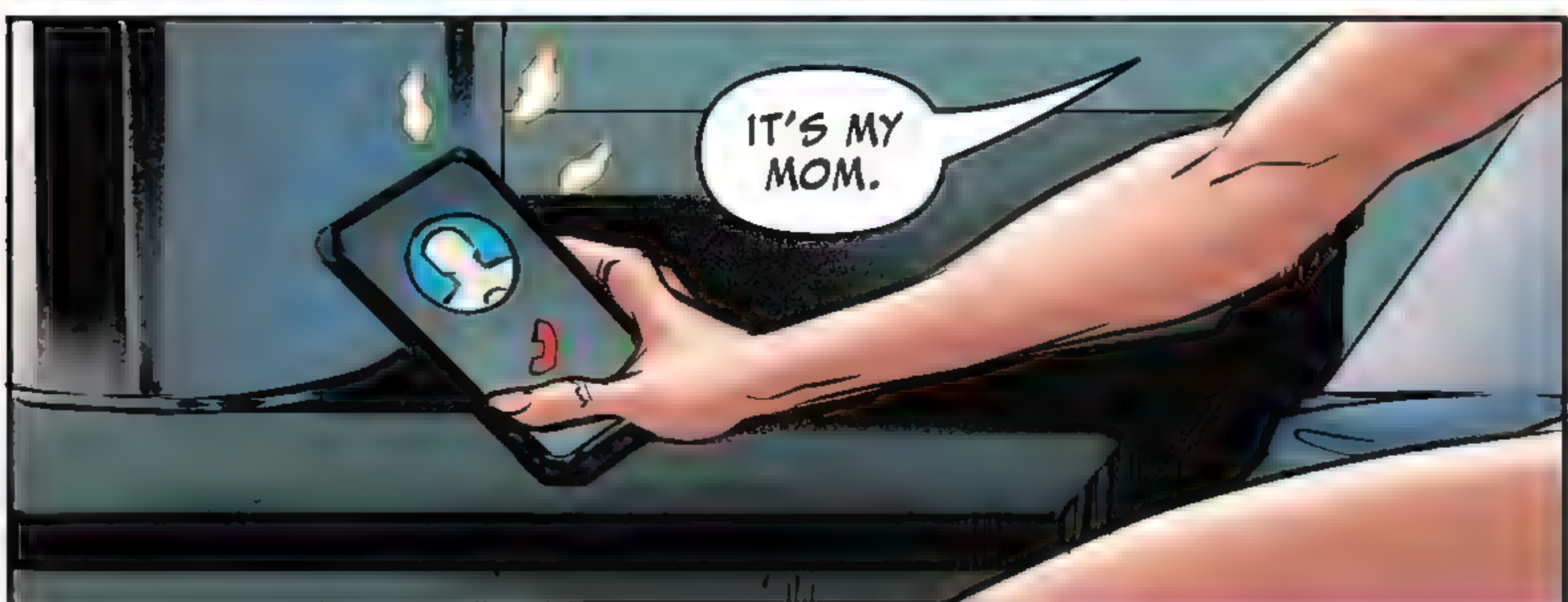
I MUST SAY...

...I AM
BEGINNING TO HAVE SOME
CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR...
INDULGENCES.

Oh, NOW YOU
HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT
MY... INDULGENCES?
I SEEM TO RECALL--

HANG ON.

Looking out
for others,
our sisters and
our brothers--



IT'S MY
MOM.

ONE MONTH AGO.

MY MOM
IS SICK,
ODESSA.

SHE'S
DYING.

Oh.

Oh,
FELICIA,
I'M SO
SORRY.

SHE'S
GOING THROUGH
TREATMENT, BUT
IT WAS A LATE
DIAGNOSIS.

I--I'VE TRIED
EVERYTHING.
THERE'S NOTHING
I CAN STEAL
THAT CAN--

--THAT
CAN HELP
HER.

WHAT
CAN I DO
TO--

I NEED YOU
TO HELP ME.
HELP HER.

I NEED YOU TO BRING
HER INTO THE GUILD.

THE
GILDED
SAINT, THE
DEAL YOU
HAVE--

SHE'LL GET
BETTER--

Oh.
FELICIA,
NO. NO.

I CAN'T.



RIGHT NOW.

WAAAAA!

SO: I'M RUMBLING.

YOU
PLAYED
ME.

THERE'S
NO DOCTOR
DOOM.
NO MONICA
RAPPACCINI.

(I MEAN,
THERE
ARE, BUT
NOWHERE
NEAR
HERE.)

JUST A GIRL
WITH A SICK
MOM.

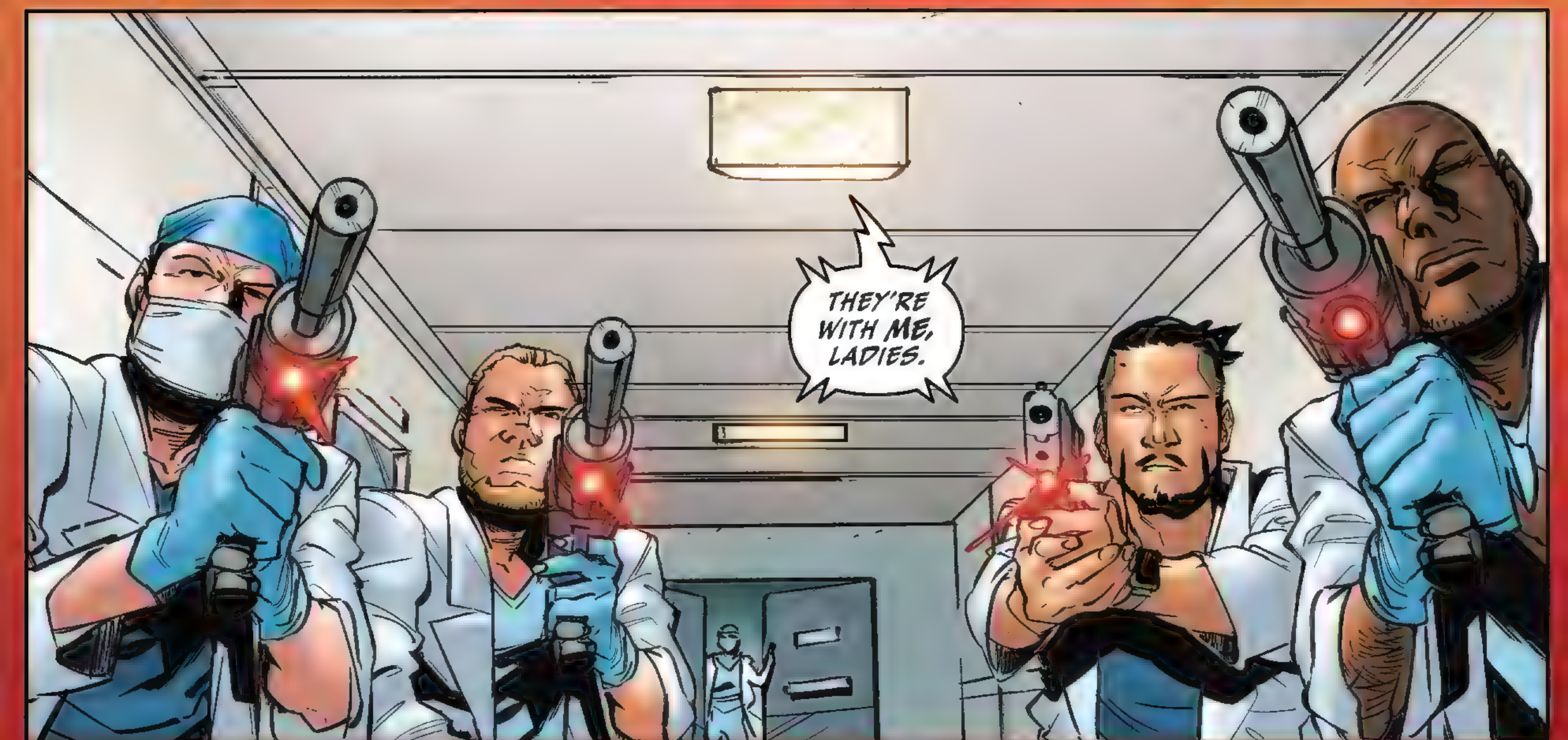
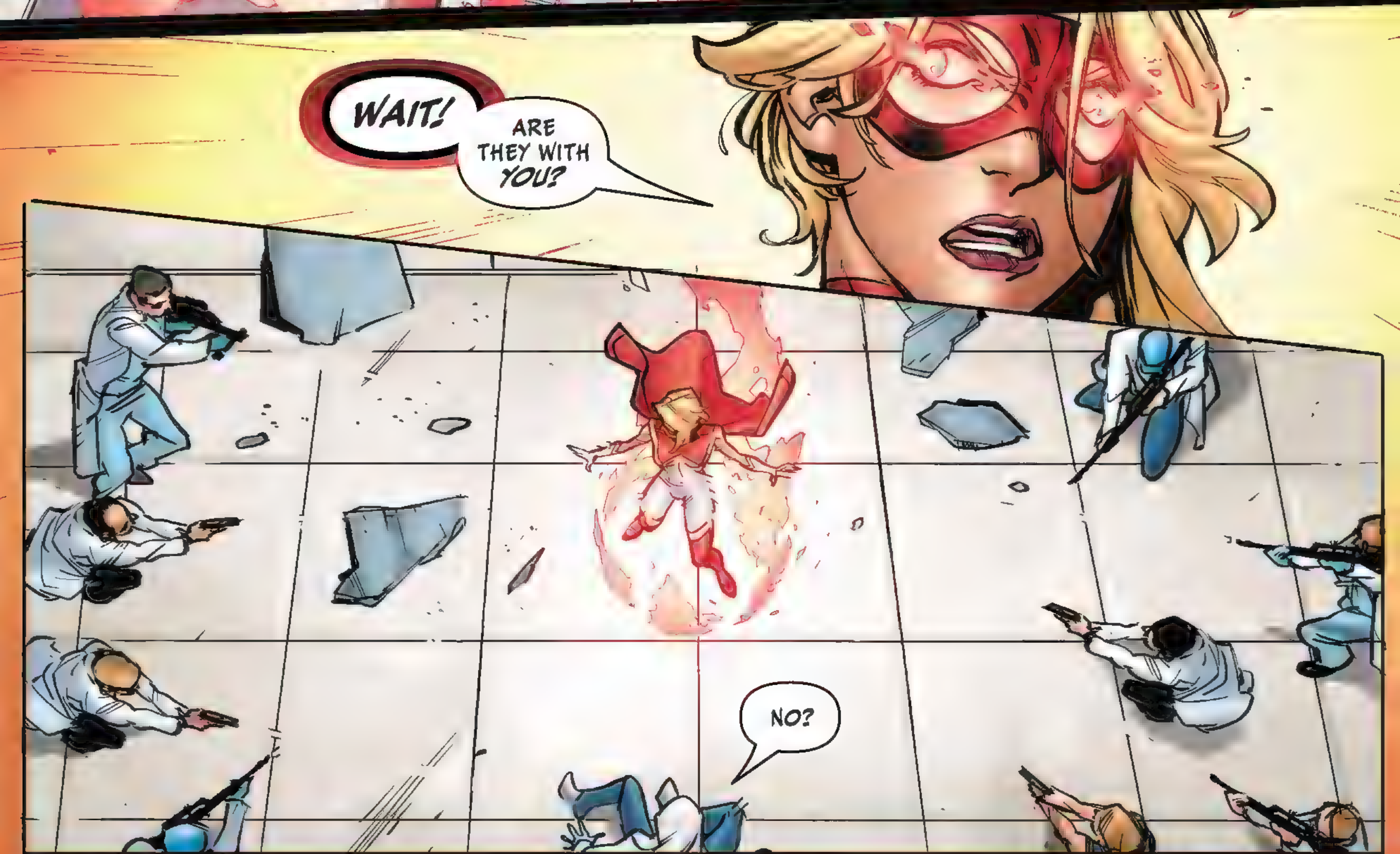
A GIRL
WITHOUT ANY
COSMIC
POWERS.

A GIRL WHO'D TRY
AND STEAL THEM,
WHATEVER IT TOOK.

A GIRL WHO'D
DO ANYTHING
NOT TO BE MADE
AN ORPHAN.

COME ON.
GROW UP.

OF
COURSE
I DID.



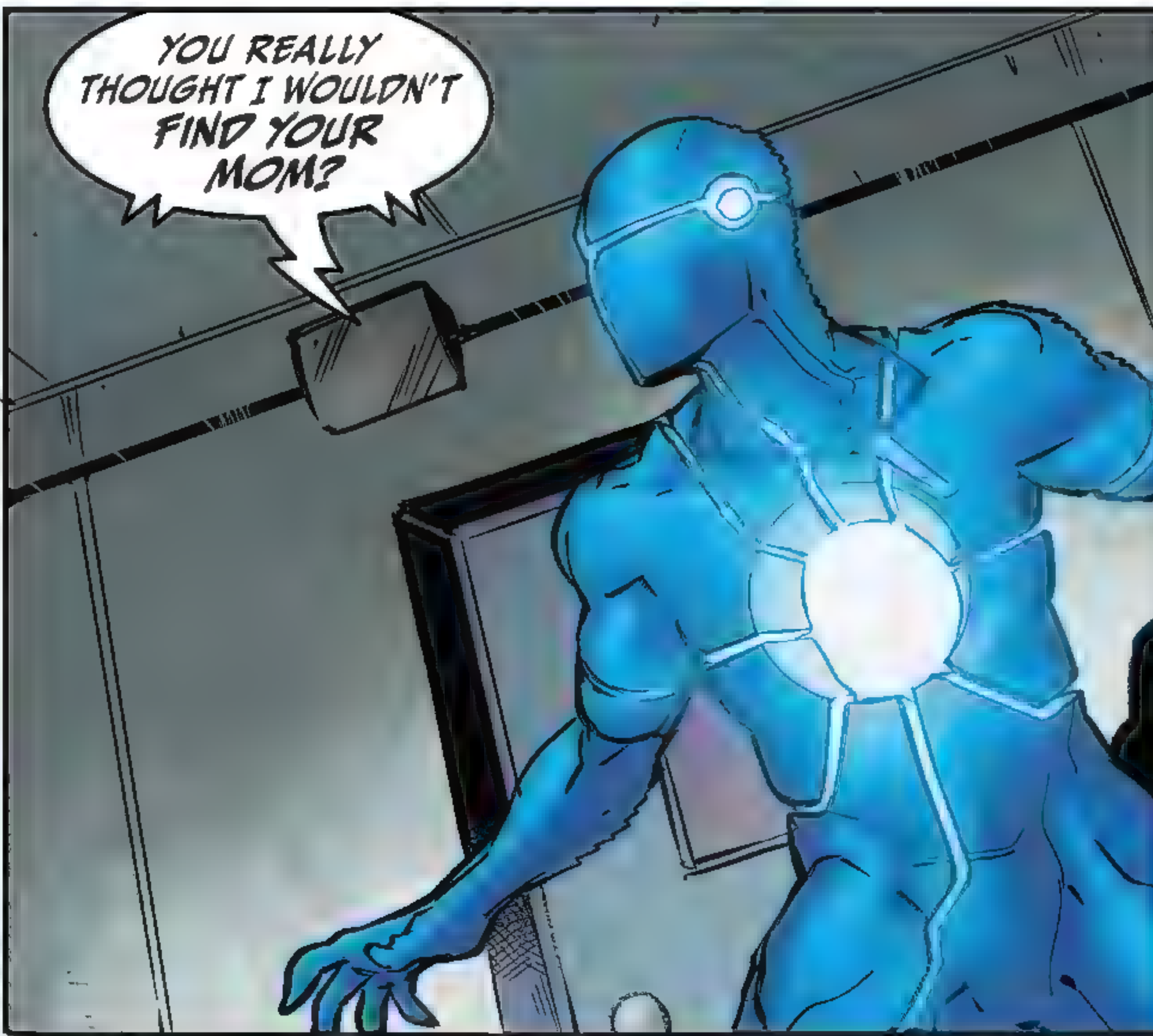


EVERY PATIENT,
EVERY DOCTOR,
EVERY NURSE IN
THIS PLACE...

MY
MERCENARIES.



YOU REALLY
THOUGHT I WOULDN'T
FIGURE IT OUT,
HARDY?



YOU REALLY
THOUGHT I WOULDN'T
FIND YOUR
MOM?



YOU'RE
GOOD,
FURY.

BETTER
THAN I GAVE
YOU CREDIT
FOR.

AND THE
THEATRICALS!
TEN OUT OF TEN.
TOP SCORES.
BRAVO!



APPRECIATE
IT.
DART
THEM.



SO HERE
WE HAVE IT.

AN ARMY OF
MERCENARIES.

A TORQUED-OFF
SUPERSPY.

AND AT LEAST ONE
COSMICALLY POWERED
JERK, ALL AFTER MY HIDE.

(SMART MONEY HAS OVERTIME AND
QUANTUM RUNNING FOR THE HILLS
AS SOON AS FURY HIT THE MIC.)

THOKKI!

AM I MISSING
ANYTHING?

DAMN IT,
BLUE SQUAD!
GET IT TOGETHER
AND PUT SOME
DARTS IN THOSE
WOMEN!

GREEN
SQUAD,
MOVE IN TO
INTERCEPT!

GREEN
SQUAD?

NAH. I THINK
THAT'S IT.

GREEN
SQUAD?

NOW.

THIS MAY NOT BE
THE BEST MOVE...



...BUT I'M A
FIRM BELIEVER
IN THE IDEA THAT
ANYTHING WORTH
DOING...

...OUGHT
TO BE DONE
WITH A
MASK ON.





WHO THE--?

This time I'll get it right--

IT'S NOT DOING ANYTHING!

DON-- STOP--

I need a second chance--

ON THREE. ONE, TWO--

DAMN IT, HARDY!

AAH!

BWOMP!

FWAASSH!

THRA-CHOOOM!

SKRUNCH!



DAMN PLACE
IS CRAWLING
WITH FURY'S
GUYS.



THEM
AND--

Uh-oh.

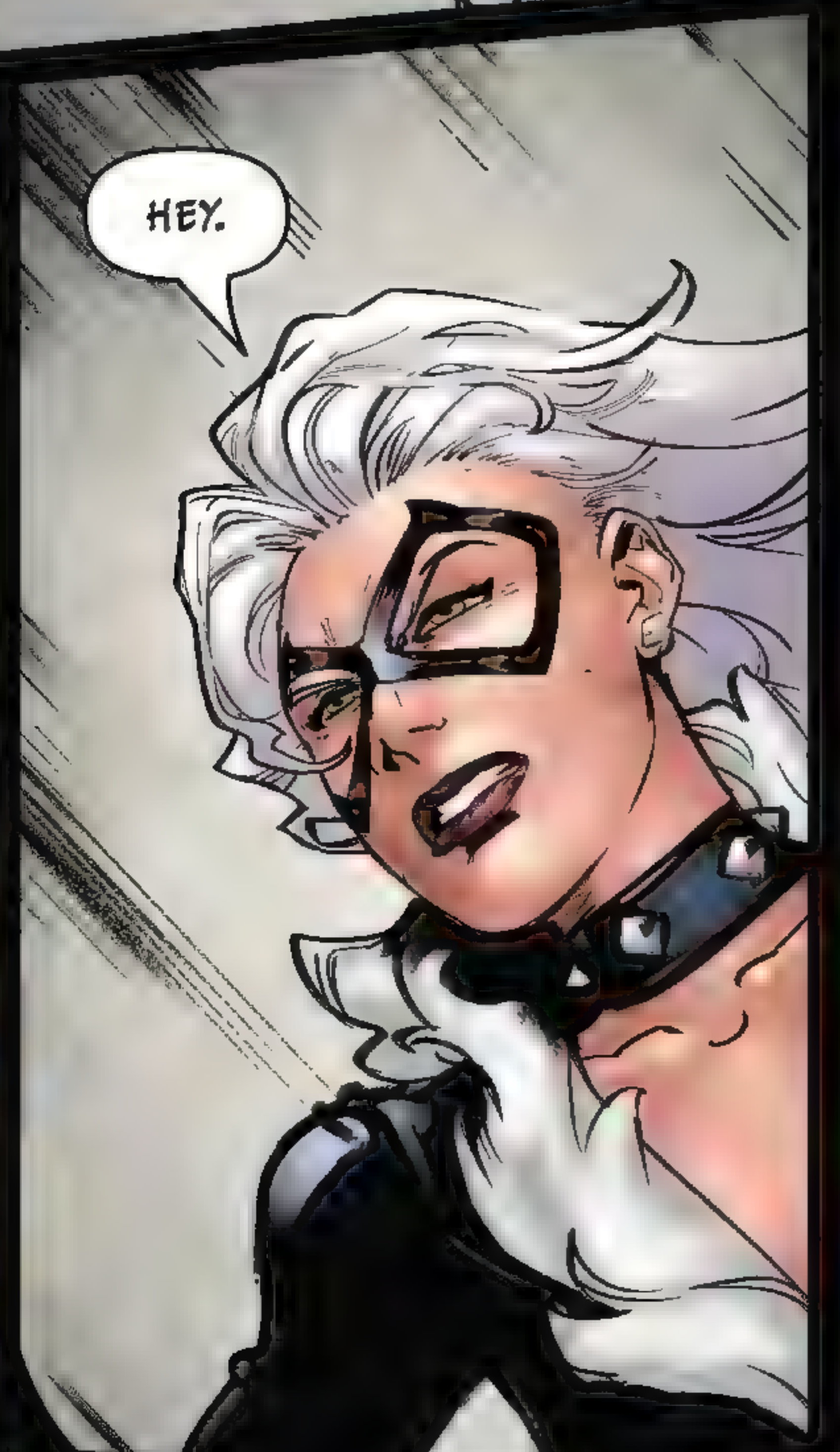
Uh-oh.



I CAN GET
YOU OUT
OF HERE,
FELICIA.

BUT YOU
HAVE TO GIVE
ME THE SCANNER
YOU'VE BEEN
USING TO FIND
THE STONE
HOSTS.

FURY
STOLE IT
FROM ME--
YOU STOLE IT
FROM FURY.
I NEED IT
BACK.



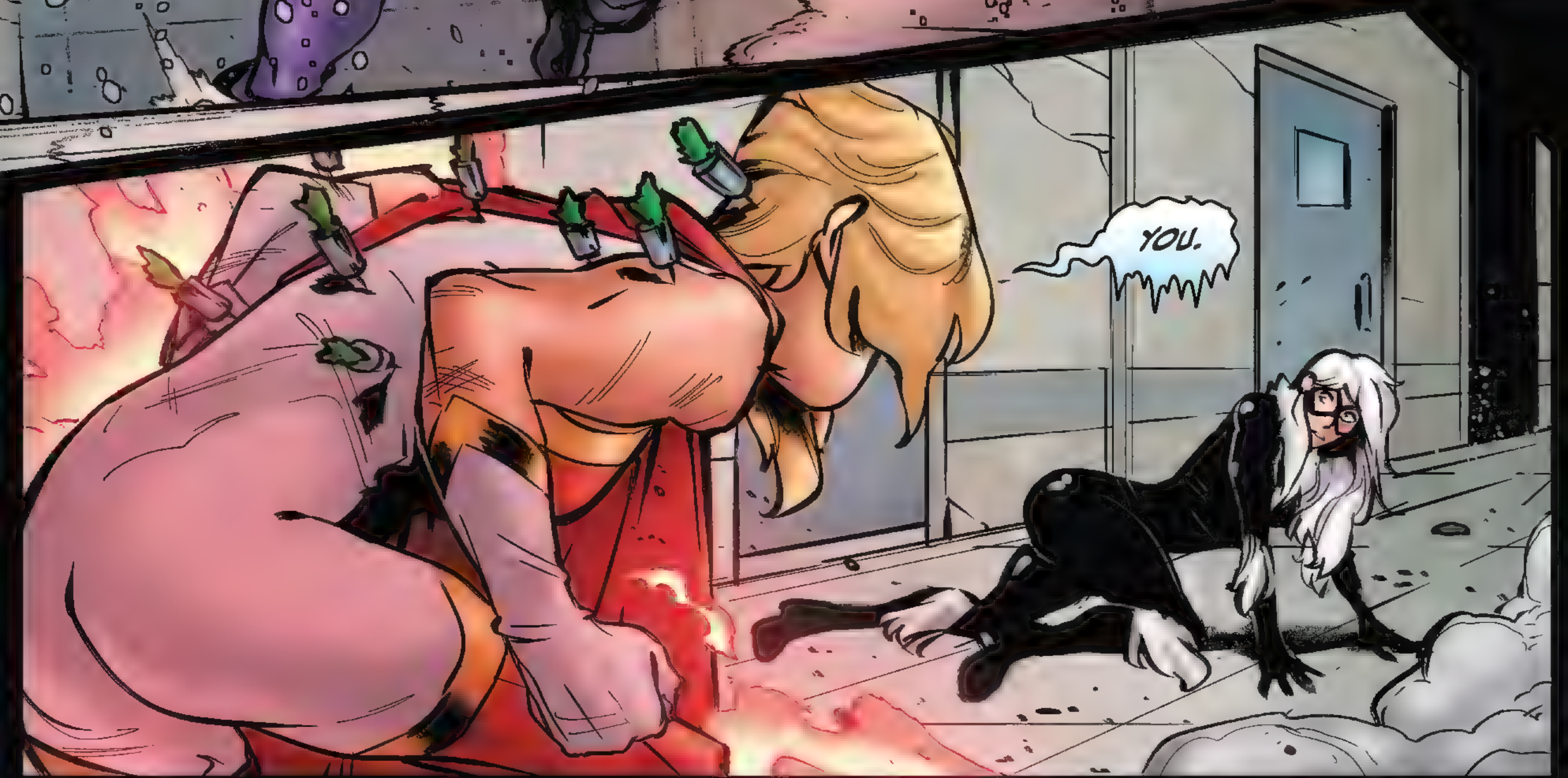
HEY.



SCREW YOU,
NIGHTHAWK!



Hh.





*SEE GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY ANNUAL #1 (2021).



YOU'RE
A DEAD
MAN!



Wooo!
GIVE
HIM THE
BUSINESS,
GIRL!



BLAM! BLAM!
HRK!



IT'S OVER,
FELICIA.

Aaah...
Nooo...

NOW.
YOU GOING
TO TELL ME
WHERE MY
SCANNER
IS?



TRASHED IT LAST NIGHT AFTER OUR THRILLING CHASE.

I GOT **THREE** OF THEM TOGETHER AND ENDED UP WRECKING A **HOSPITAL**, AND I'M JUST A SIMPLE (IF GORGEOUS) CROOK.

BUT, YOU? NIGHTHAWK? NAH.

NO ONE NEEDS GUYS LIKE YOU TWO GETTING THAT KIND OF POWER.



WELL, THIS IS TURNING INTO A TOTAL **DEBACLE...**

BUT AT LEAST I GOT YOU.

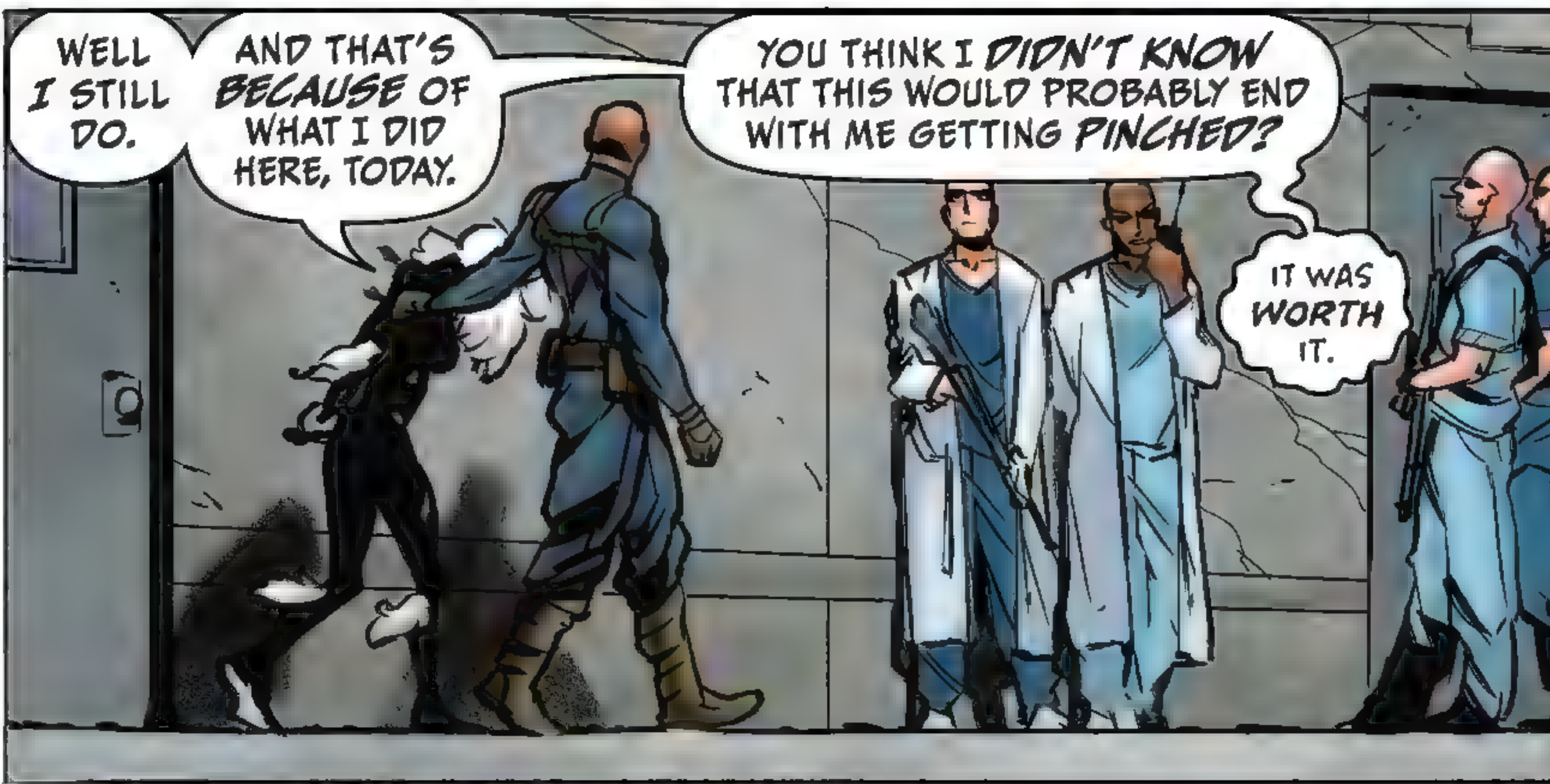
Pfff. PLEASE.

LISTEN, FURY. YOU GOT A MOM?

CHAC!



NOT ANYMORE.



WELL I STILL DO.

AND THAT'S **BECAUSE** OF WHAT I DID HERE, TODAY.

YOU THINK I **DIDN'T** KNOW THAT THIS WOULD PROBABLY END WITH ME GETTING PINCHED?

IT WAS WORTH IT.



YEAH. AND IMAGINE IF I HAD SPRUNG MY TRAP **BEFORE** YOU GOT A CHANCE TO FIX YOUR MOM UP. THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN A REAL SHAME.

I **KNOW** WHAT IT'S LIKE TO LOSE A MOM, FELICIA.

WAIT, WHAT--?

AND I ALSO KNOW THIS:

"YOU OWE
ME ONE"

A WEEK LATER.
THE RAFT.

THIS IS
MY WORST
NIGHTMARE,
FELICIA.

IT WAS BAD
ENOUGH WHEN
I HAD TO VISIT
YOUR FATHER
LIKE THIS.

BUT THAT WAS
ORDINARY PRISON.
THIS PLACE--IT'S FILLED
WITH MANIACS--

RELAX.

MOM.
MOM.

I MEAN, YEAH,
ME BEING ON THE
RAFT INSTEAD OF
NORMAL JAIL?
IT'S STUPID. JUST
HIZZONER BILL FISK,
FLEXING.

BUT WHATEVER.
MAYBE I'LL GET A
THUNDERBOLTS
PARDON OR
SOMETHING. WHO
CARES?

BECAUSE
LOOK AT
YOU!

IT'S
LIKE YOU
WERE NEVER
SICK!

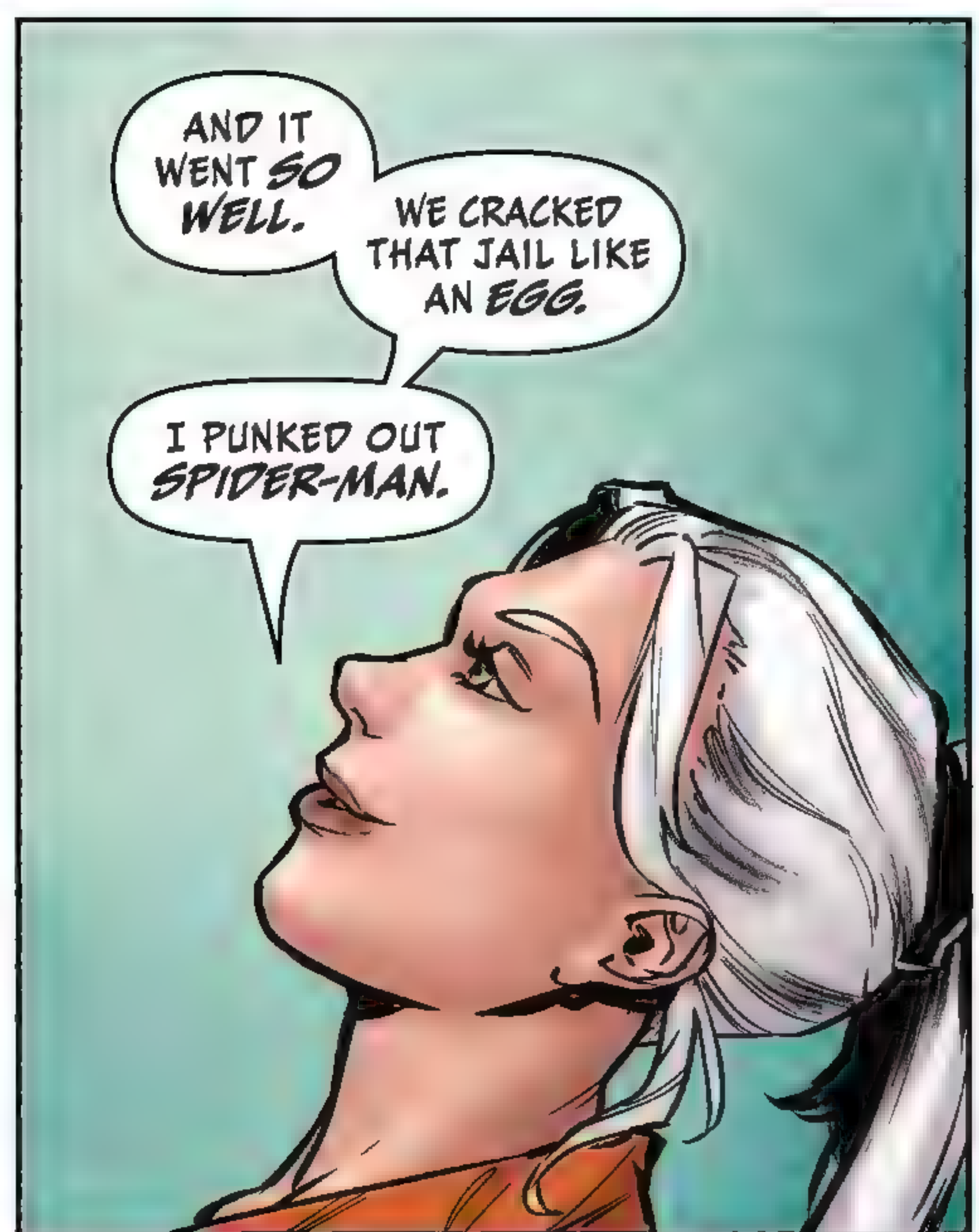
FELICIA!

I'D RATHER
HAVE DIED
THAN SEE YOU
IN JAIL!

DO YOU HAVE
ANY IDEA WHAT
KIND OF SENTENCE
A "RECKLESS USE
OF COSMIC
POWERS" CHARGE
CARRIES?

Ah, ah!

ALLEGED
"RECKLESS
USE OF COSMIC
POWERS,"
PLEASE.

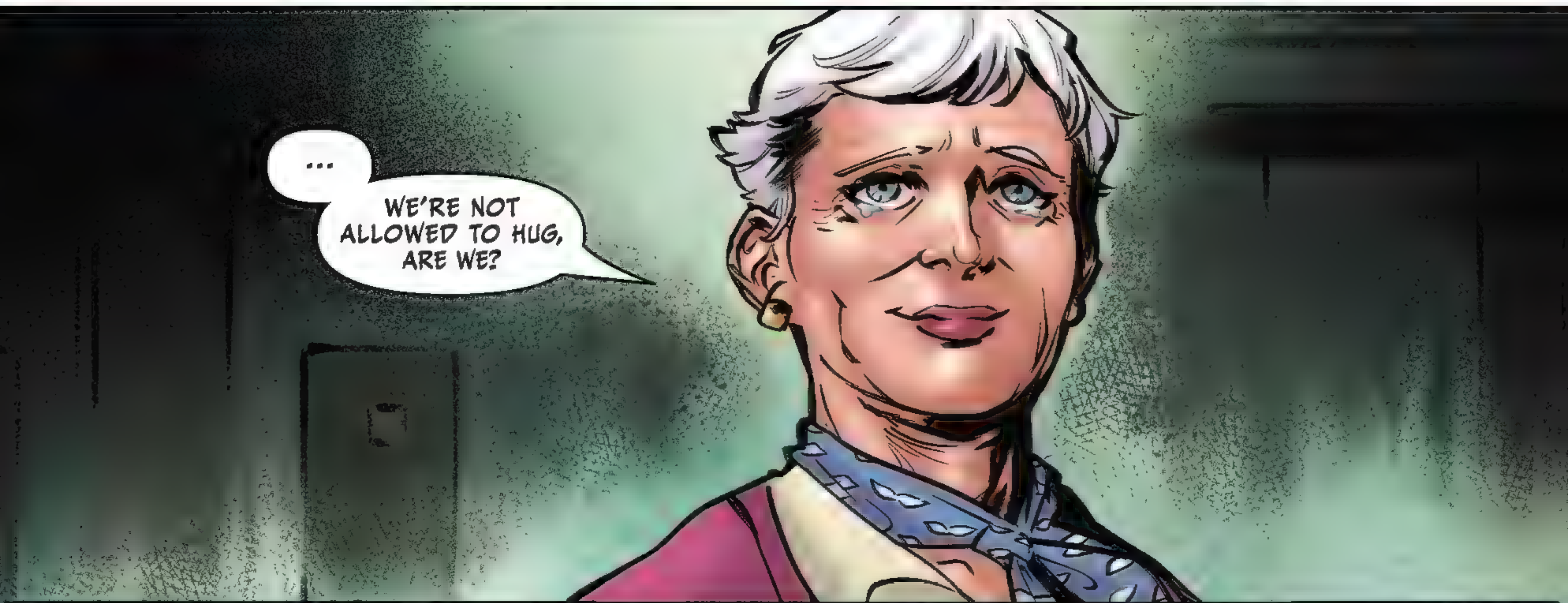




I WASN'T
GOOD ENOUGH
TO SAVE HIS
LIFE.



THIS TIME,
THOUGH...
...I WAS.



...
WE'RE NOT
ALLOWED TO HUG,
ARE WE?



NO.
UNLESS
YOU'RE STILL
MAD AT ME FOR
GETTING PINCHED
AND WANT ME TO
GET TAZED.

AGAIN.







IRON CAT 1



SOMETIMES I SURPRISE MYSELF WITH HOW FAR I'LL GO FOR A MEMORY.

FELICIA HARDY.
THE BLACK CAT.
NEW YORK CITY'S
SUPER-CRIME IT GIRL.



IS EVERYONE LIKE THAT? OR JUST ME?

BECAUSE IT'S NOT LIKE THIS IS GOING TO BE A CAKEWALK. IT'S GOING TO BE A LOT OF WORK POPPING THIS VAULT.

AND IT'S NOT LIKE I'M GOING TO *SELL* THE THING, ONCE I STEAL IT. THIS ONE IS STRICTLY PRO BONO—PERSONAL.



THE GAVRILOV
DIAMOND.

EXCEPT IT'S NOT
REALLY A DIAMOND.
NO ONE KNOWS WHAT
IT IS, EXACTLY.



THEY SAY THAT
IT CAME FROM
ANOTHER WORLD.

THAT IT FELL OUT OF
THE DEVIL'S OWN
TREASURE HOARD.

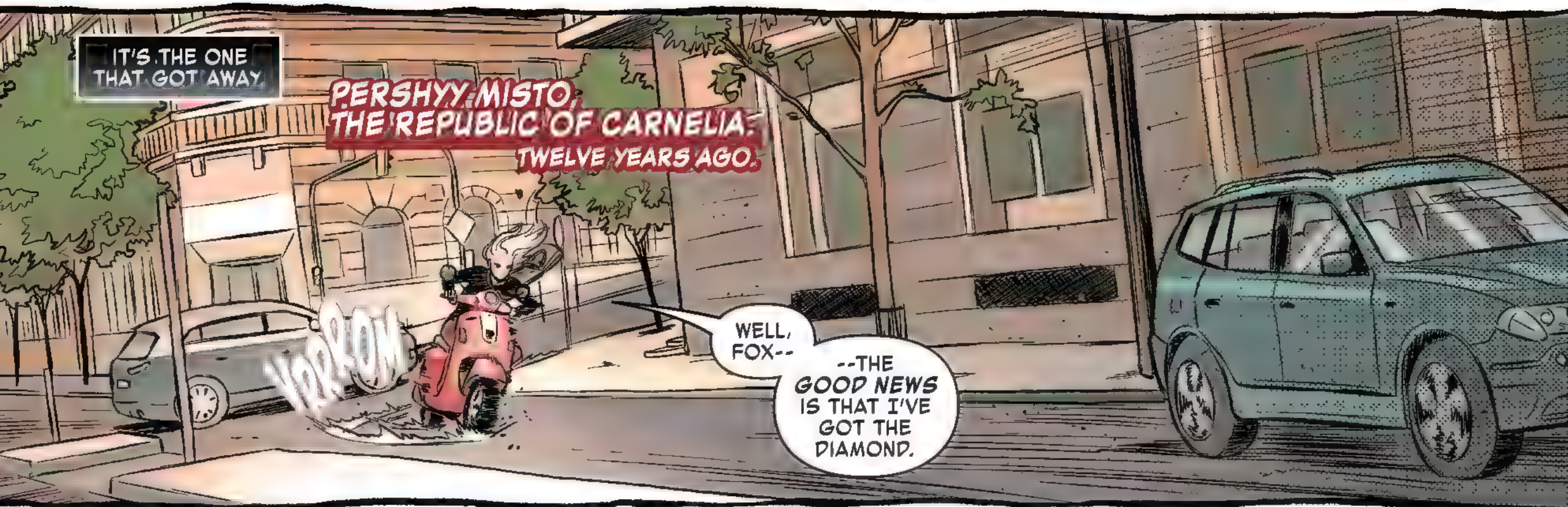
THAT IT'S ALIVE, THAT
YOU CAN SEE YOUR OWN
DEATH IN ITS FACETS.
THAT IT WHISPERS TO
PEOPLE AT NIGHT.



YOU KNOW,
THE USUAL
BUNK.

FOR ME
THOUGH?

CLK CLK CLK



IT'S THE ONE
THAT GOT AWAY

PERSHYY MISTO
THE 'REPUBLIC' OF CARNELIA
TWELVE YEARS AGO.

WELL,
FOX--

--THE
GOOD NEWS
IS THAT I'VE
GOT THE
DIAMOND.



FELICIA HARDY.
GLOBE-TROTTERING,
TEENAGE SUPER
CRIMINAL.

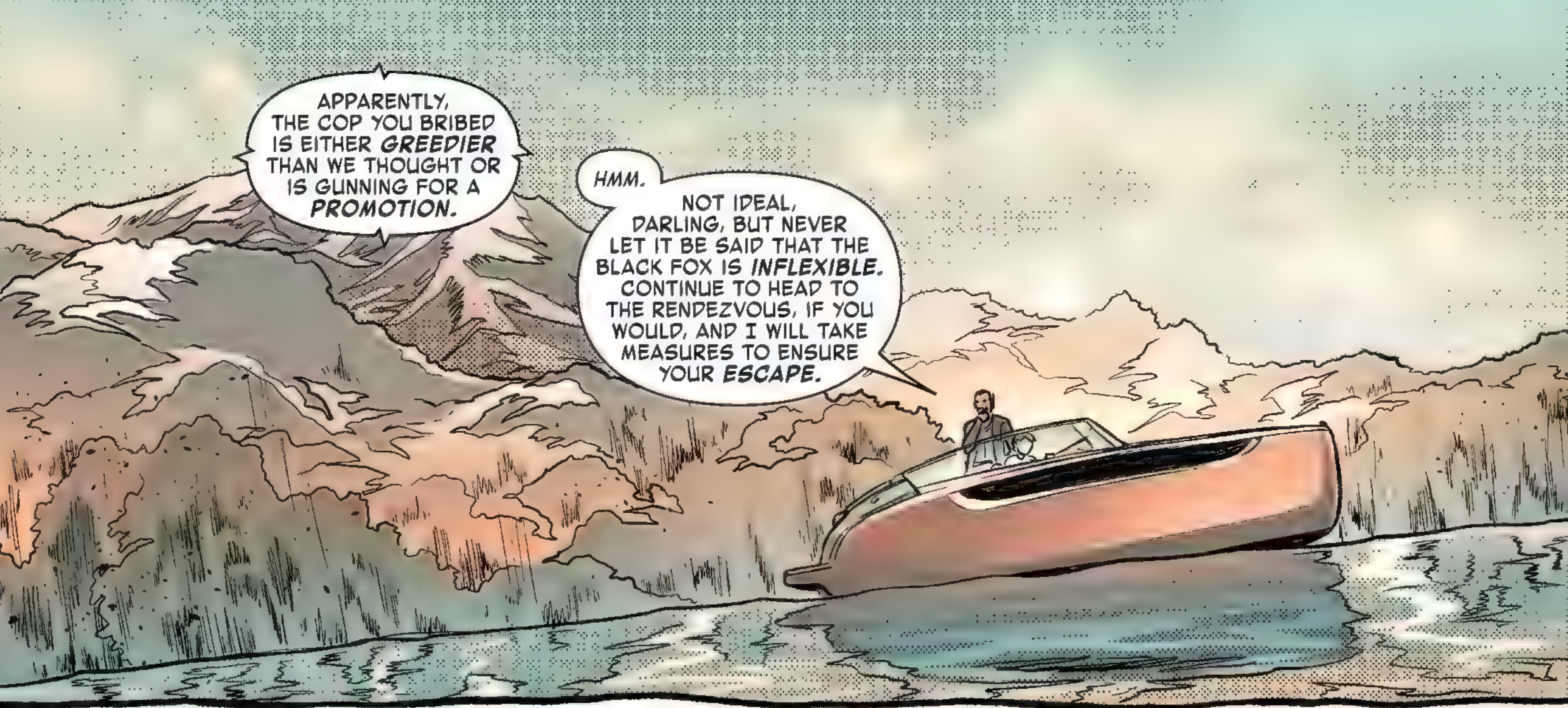
THE BAD
NEWS?



ERR,
YEAH.

I DIDN'T
EXACTLY GET
OUT CLEAN.

WUWAH
WUWAH
WUWAH



APPARENTLY,
THE COP YOU BRIBED
IS EITHER *GREEDIER*
THAN WE THOUGHT OR
IS GUNNING FOR A
PROMOTION.

HMM.

NOT IDEAL,
DARLING, BUT NEVER
LET IT BE SAID THAT THE
BLACK FOX IS *INFLEXIBLE*.
CONTINUE TO HEAD TO
THE RENDEZVOUS, IF YOU
WOULD, AND I WILL TAKE
MEASURES TO ENSURE
YOUR *ESCAPE*.

THE BLACK FOX.
#3 ON INTERPOL'S MOST WANTED
LIST (AND RISING). CURRENTLY
TRAINING THE BEST OF THE NEXT
GENERATION OF CRIMINAL YOUTH.

IS
FELICIA OKAY,
FOX?

TAMARA BLAKE.
ALSO A GLOBE-TROTTERING,
TEENAGE SUPER CRIMINAL.



OH, SHE
WILL BE FINE.
WORRY NOT,
DARLING.

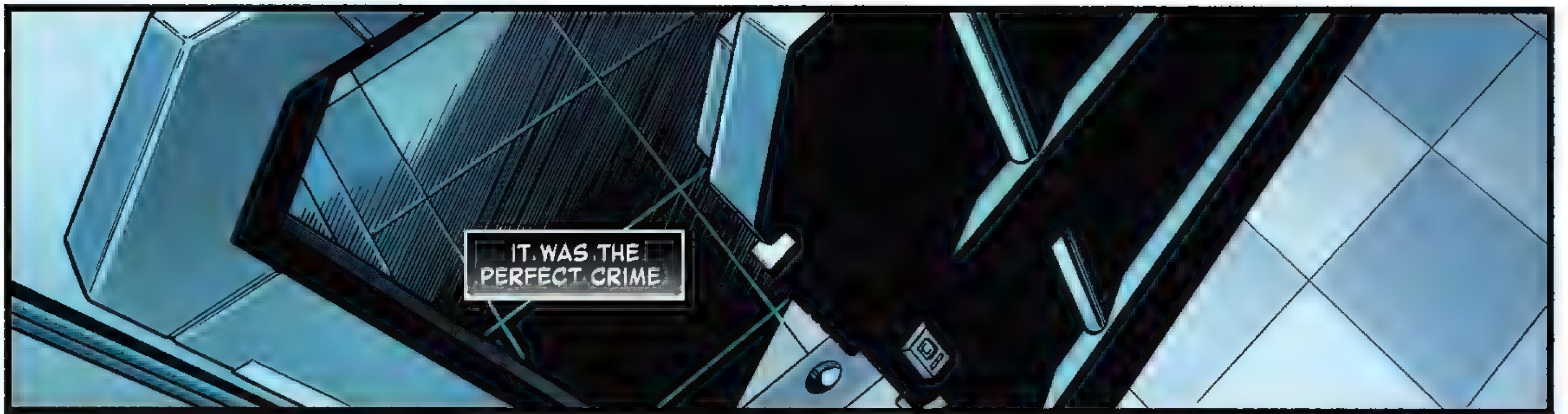
THE
BLACK FOX
ALWAYS HAS
A PLAN.

OH
YEAH? WHAT'S
COOKING?



LAWS HAVE
BEEN *BROKEN*,
MY DEAR. CRIMES
COMMITTED.

I AM GOING
TO CALL THE
POLICE.

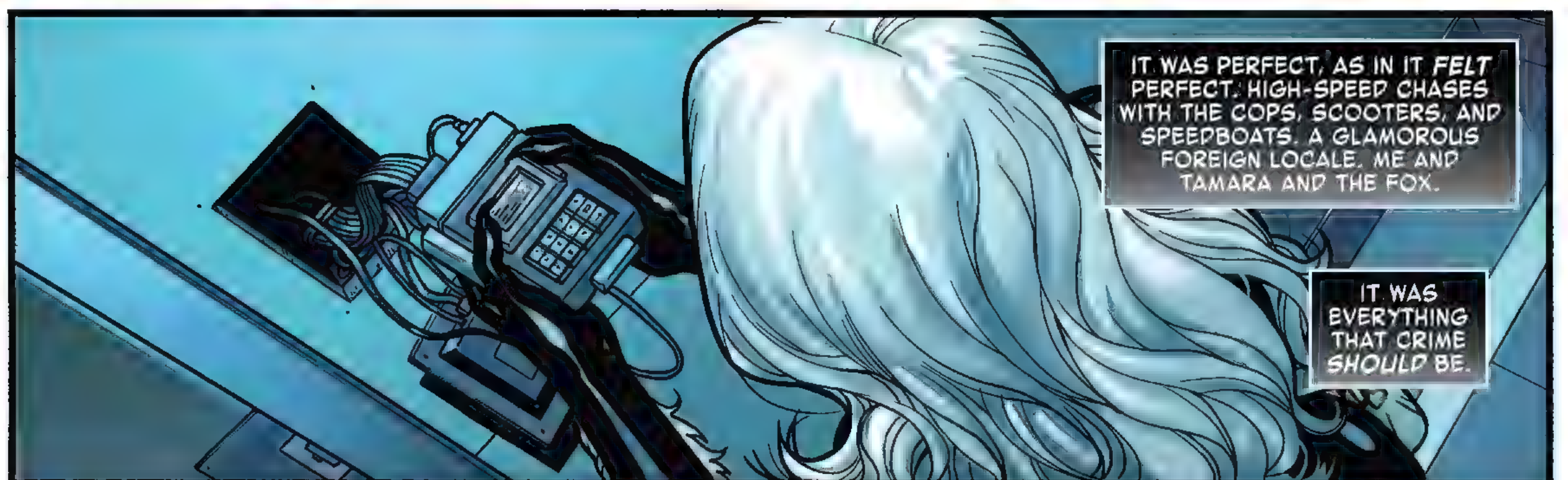


IT WAS THE
PERFECT CRIME



NOT PERFECT AS IN
"IT WENT WITHOUT A
HITCH, COPS WERE
NONE THE WISER," ETC.

NO. IN THAT
RESPECT, IT WAS
A *DISASTER*.



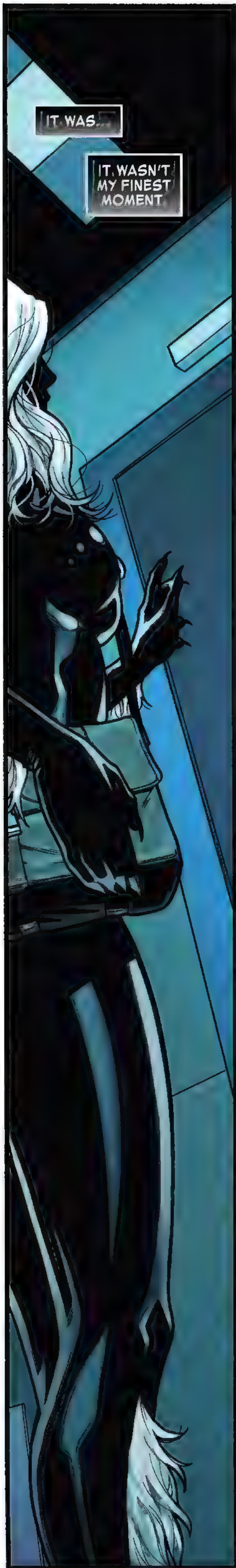
IT WAS PERFECT, AS IN IT *FELT*
PERFECT. HIGH-SPEED CHASES
WITH THE COPS, SCOOTERS, AND
SPEEDBOATS. A GLAMOROUS
FOREIGN LOCALE. ME AND
TAMARA AND THE FOX.

IT WAS
EVERYTHING
THAT CRIME
SHOULD BE.



THE WAY IT FEELS WHEN
YOU'RE A KID, WHEN YOU'RE
RIPPING AND RUNNING WITH
SOME OF THE PEOPLE YOU
LOVE MOST IN THE WORLD.

TWELVE YEARS
LATER, LESS
THAN A YEAR AGO,
I BETRAYED
THE FOX.



IT WAS...

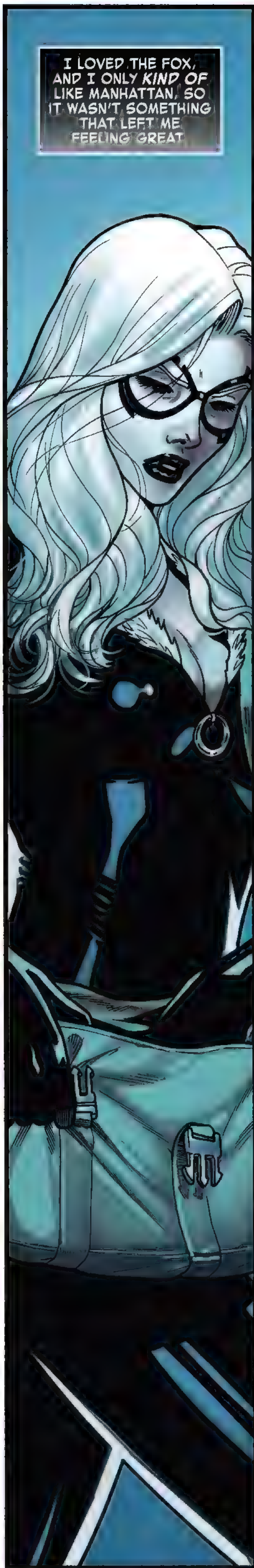
IT WASN'T
MY FINEST
MOMENT.



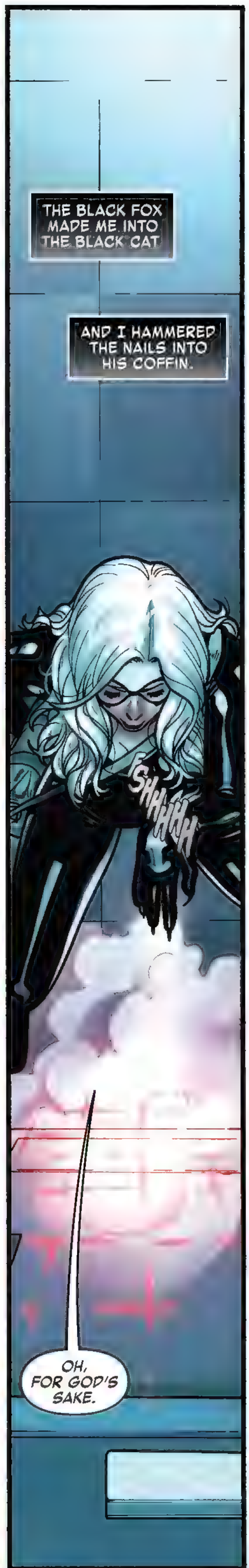
BUT I HAD
THE BEST
INTENTIONS.

THE FOX WAS DYING.
HE WAS ABOUT
TO TRADE ALL OF
MANHATTAN TO AN
ALIEN GOD. IN RETURN
FOR IMMORTALITY,
AND HE TRICKED ME
INTO HELPING HIM.

I SAVED
MANHATTAN.
I LOST THE
FOX.



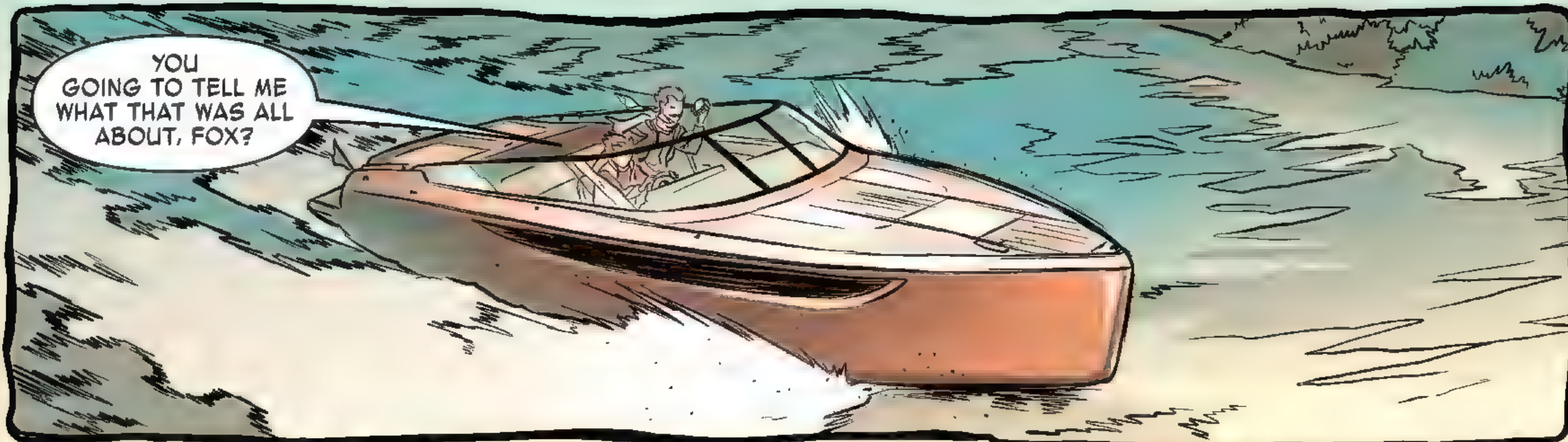
I LOVED THE FOX,
AND I ONLY *KIND OF*
LIKE MANHATTAN, SO
IT WASN'T SOMETHING
THAT LEFT ME
FEELING GREAT.



THE BLACK FOX
MADE ME INTO
THE BLACK CAT.

AND I HAMMERED
THE NAILS INTO
HIS COFFIN.

OH,
FOR GOD'S
SAKE.

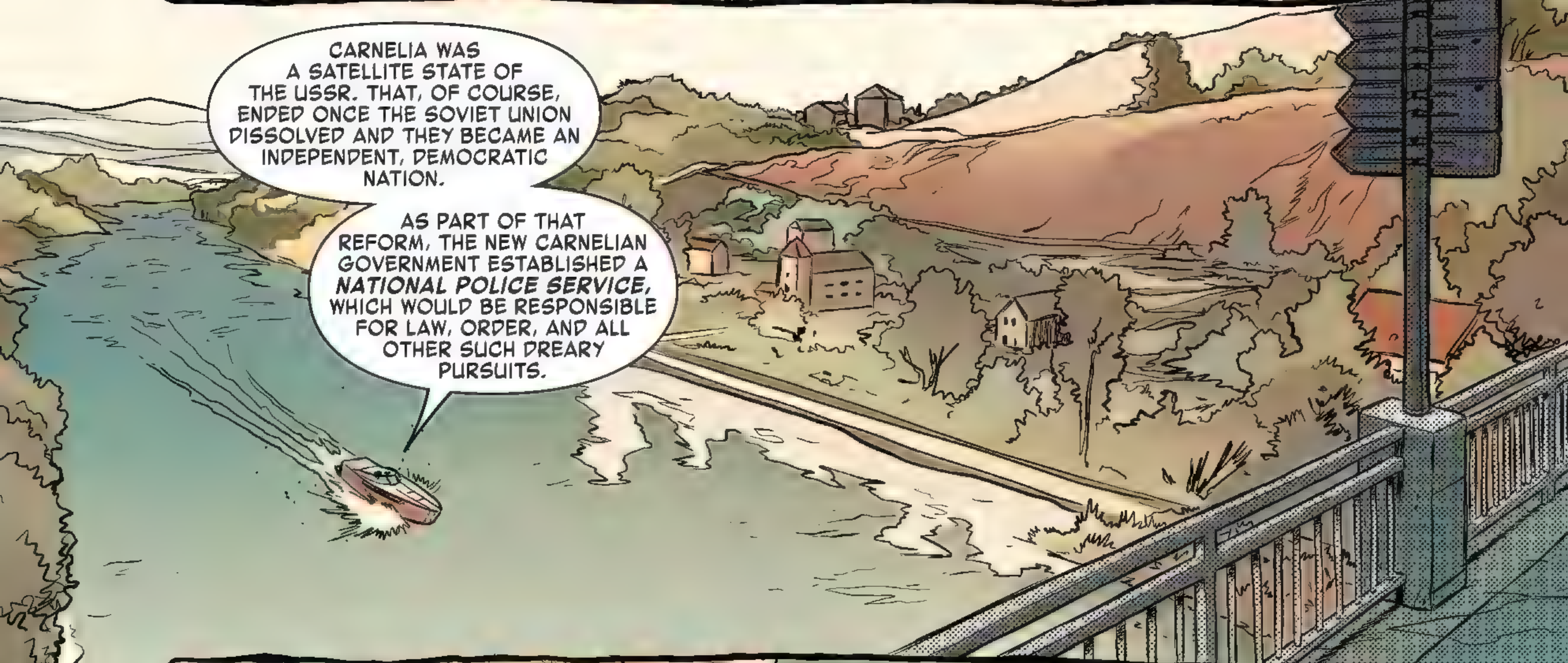


YOU
GOING TO TELL ME
WHAT THAT WAS ALL
ABOUT, FOX?



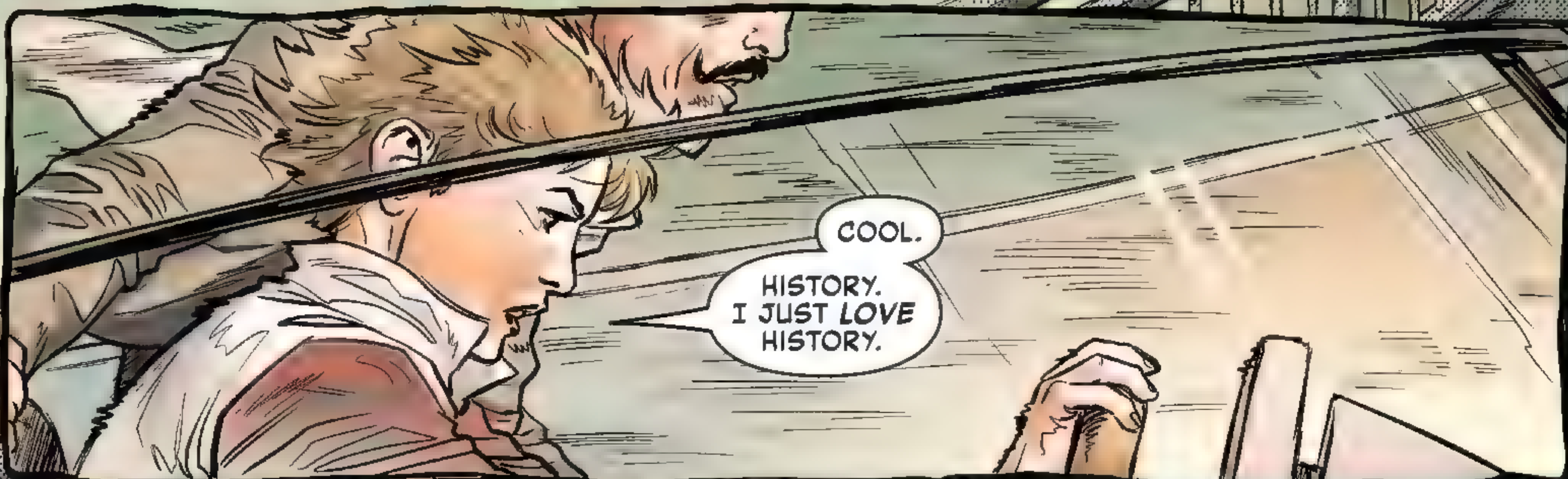
TCH.

MY DEAR,
WHY DO I BOTHER
TO PUT THESE MISSION
BRIEFS TOGETHER WHEN
NEITHER YOU NOR
FELICIA EVER READS
THEM?



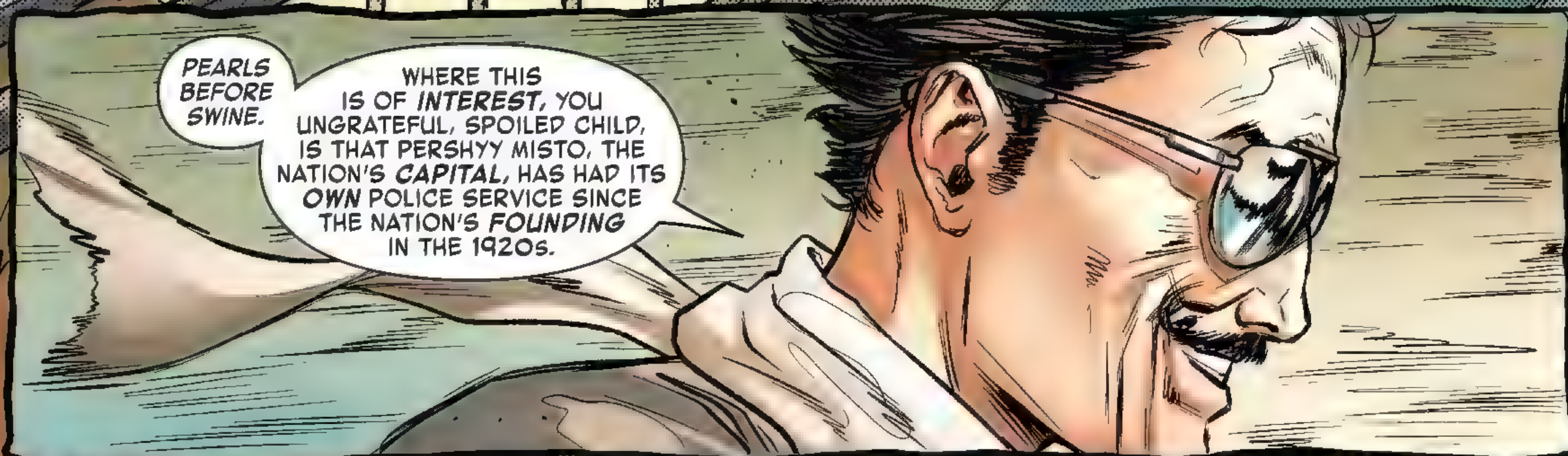
CARNELIA WAS
A SATELLITE STATE OF
THE USSR. THAT, OF COURSE,
ENDED ONCE THE SOVIET UNION
DISSOLVED AND THEY BECAME AN
INDEPENDENT, DEMOCRATIC
NATION.

AS PART OF THAT
REFORM, THE NEW CARNELIAN
GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED A
NATIONAL POLICE SERVICE,
WHICH WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE
FOR LAW, ORDER, AND ALL
OTHER SUCH DREARY
PURSUITS.



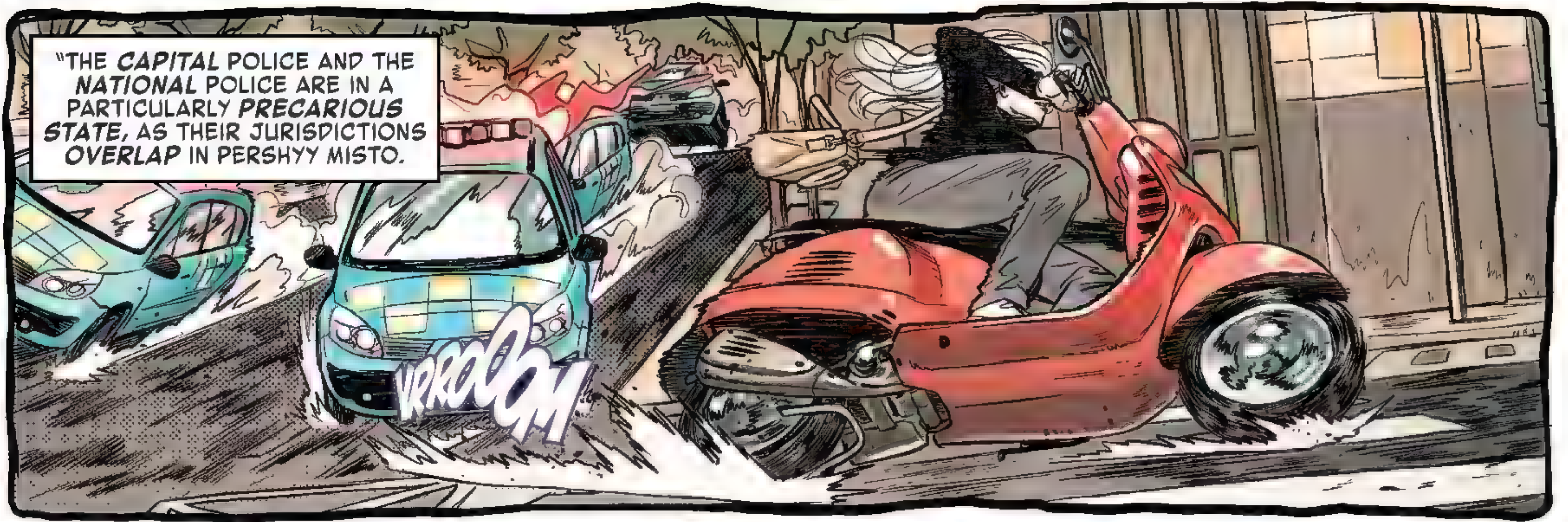
COOL.

HISTORY.
I JUST LOVE
HISTORY.



PEARLS
BEFORE
SWINE.

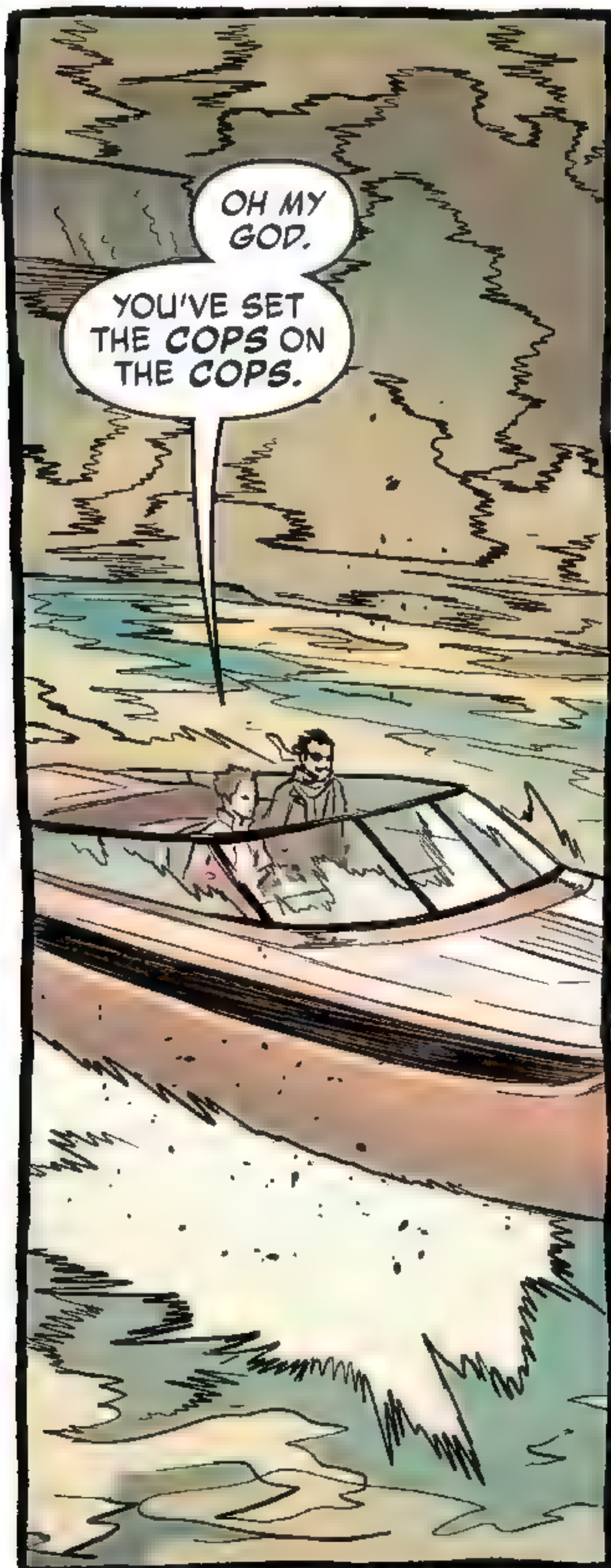
WHERE THIS
IS OF INTEREST, YOU
UNGRATEFUL, SPOILED CHILD,
IS THAT PERSHYY MISTO, THE
NATION'S CAPITAL, HAS HAD ITS
OWN POLICE SERVICE SINCE
THE NATION'S FOUNDED
IN THE 1920s.



"THE CAPITAL POLICE AND THE NATIONAL POLICE ARE IN A PARTICULARLY PRECARIOUS STATE, AS THEIR JURISDICTIONS OVERLAP IN PERSHYY MISTO."



"OH, AND THEY HATE EACH OTHER."



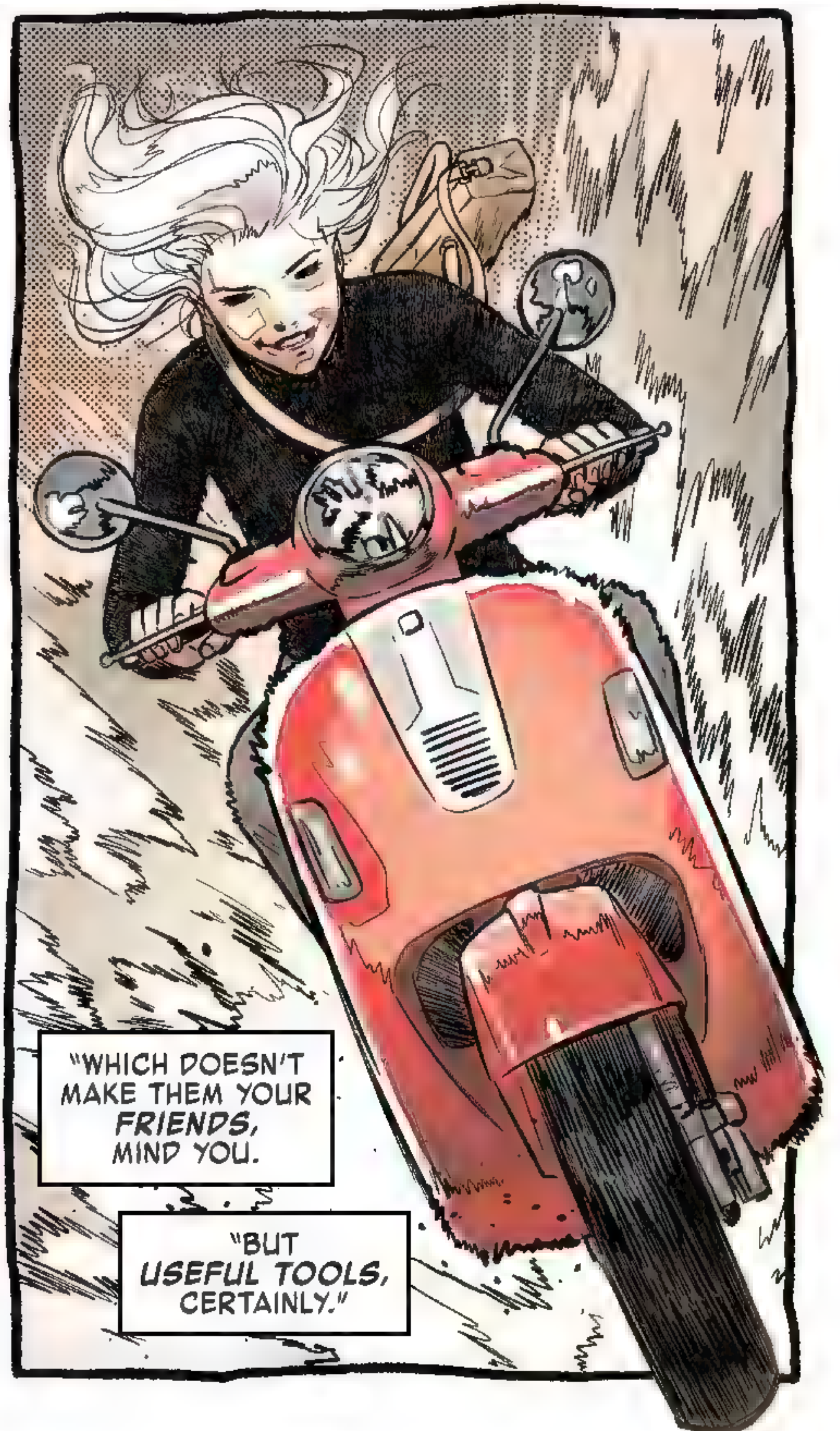
"OH MY GOD."

"YOU'VE SET THE COPS ON THE COPS."



"TAKE NOTE, DARLING."

"EVEN YOUR ENEMIES HAVE ENEMIES."



"WHICH DOESN'T MAKE THEM YOUR FRIENDS, MIND YOU."

"BUT USEFUL TOOLS, CERTAINLY."



MAYBE THAT'S
WHAT THIS IS
ALL ABOUT.

MAYBE IT'S FOR THE FOX.
FINALLY FINISHING THE
GAVRILOV DIAMOND JOB
ALL THESE YEARS LATER



I GUESS
THEY CALL THIS
CLOSURE

OH, IT'S
THE LAST TIME
OH, IT'S THE
LAST TIME



WHAT
THE--?

OH,
IT'S THE
LAST-EST
TIME

HELLO?

I WANT IT
BACK, FELICIA.
DO YOU HEAR
ME?

THE--THE
DIAMOND?

WHAT THE
HELL? HOW DID
YOU GET MY NUMBER?
AND HOW DID YOU
TURN ON MY
RINGER...



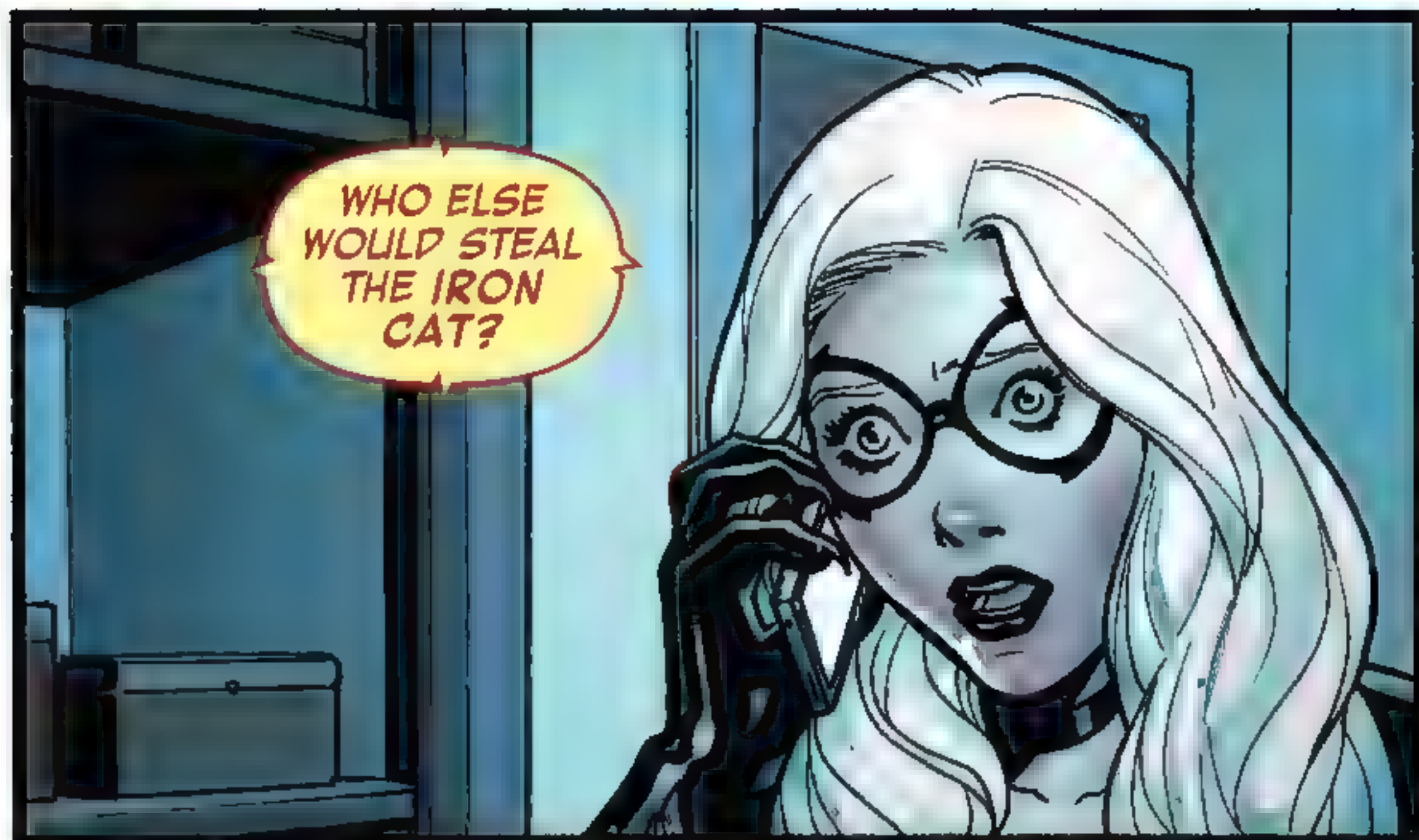
...STARK?

DIAMOND?

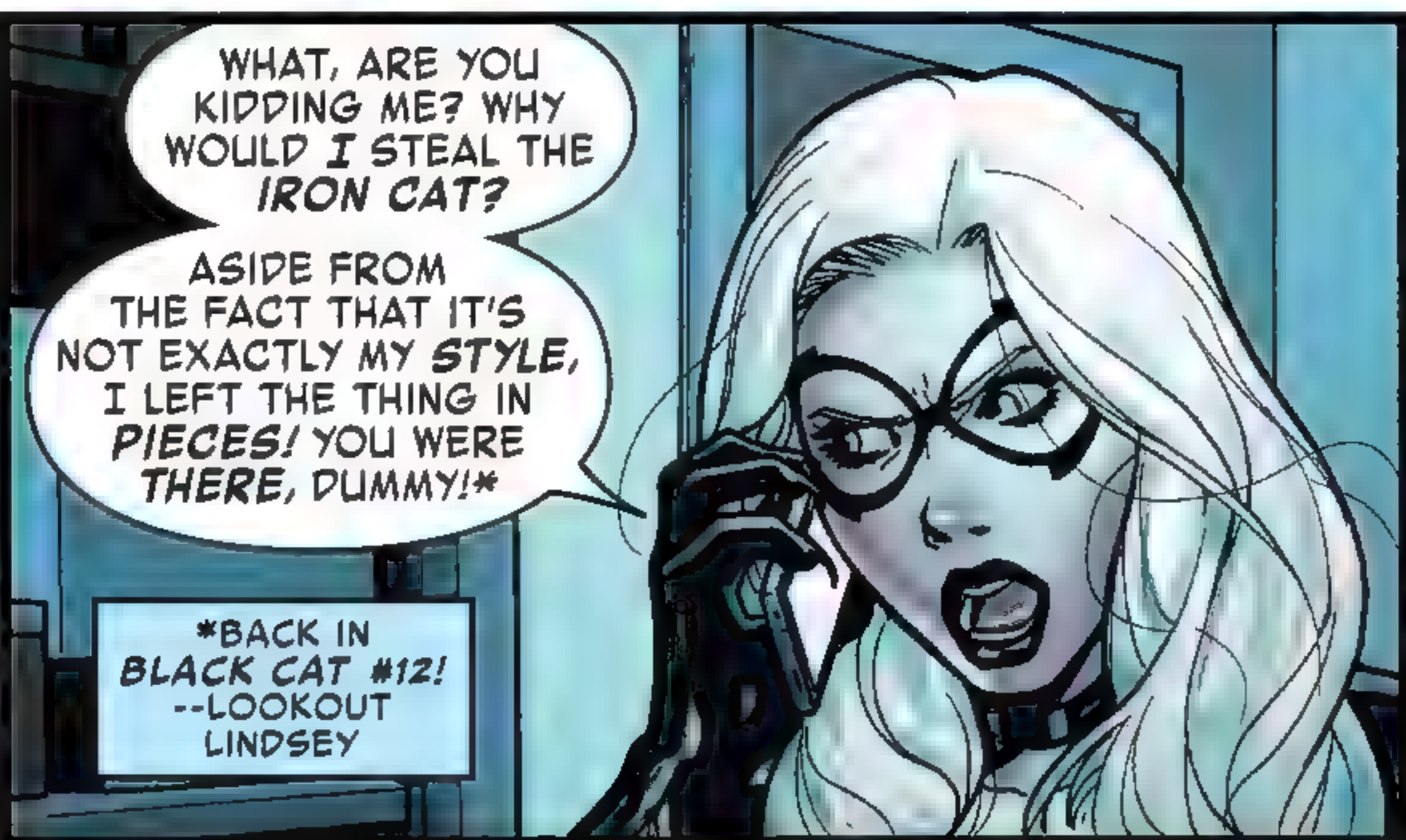
WHAT ARE YOU--

YOU HIT ME TONIGHT--ONE OF MY STORAGE FACILITIES. SCREENED IT WITH A VIRAL SYSTEM ATTACK THAT MY COMPUTER SYSTEMS ARE STILL FEELING.

AND HOW DO I KNOW IT WAS YOU?



WHO ELSE WOULD STEAL THE IRON CAT?



WHAT, ARE YOU KIDDING ME? WHY WOULD I STEAL THE IRON CAT?

ASIDE FROM THE FACT THAT IT'S NOT EXACTLY MY *STYLE*, I LEFT THE THING IN *PIECES*! YOU WERE *THERE*, DUMMY!*

*BACK IN BLACK CAT #12!
--LOOKOUT LINDSEY



WELL, I REBUILT IT SINCE THEN. BETTER THAN EVER, ACTUALLY.

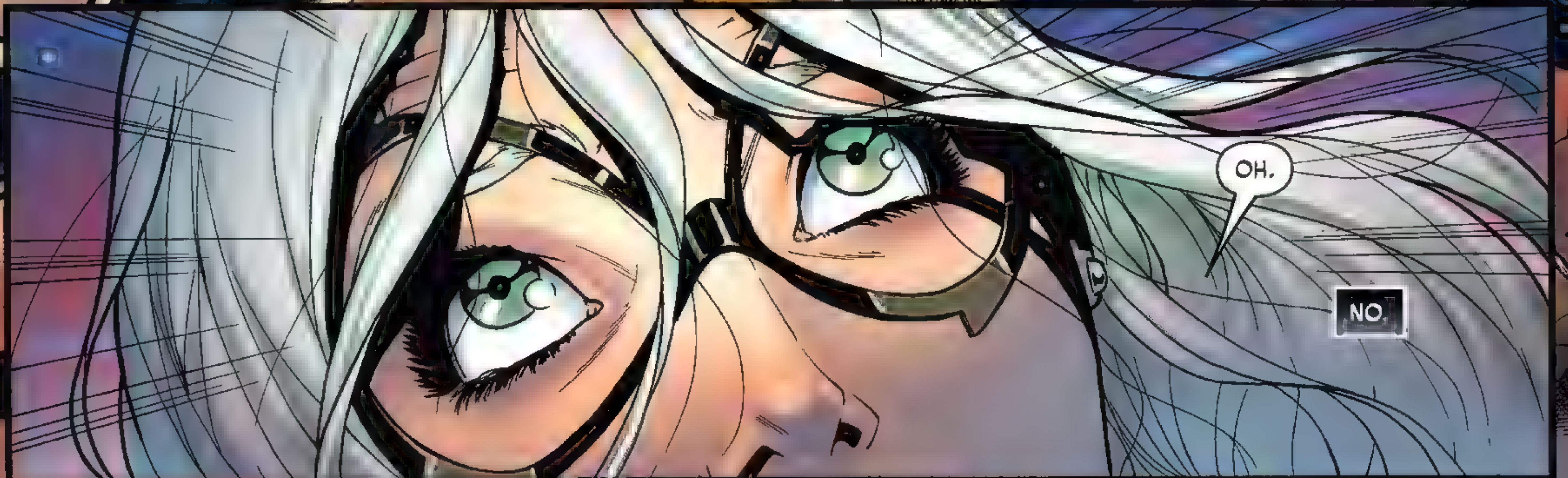
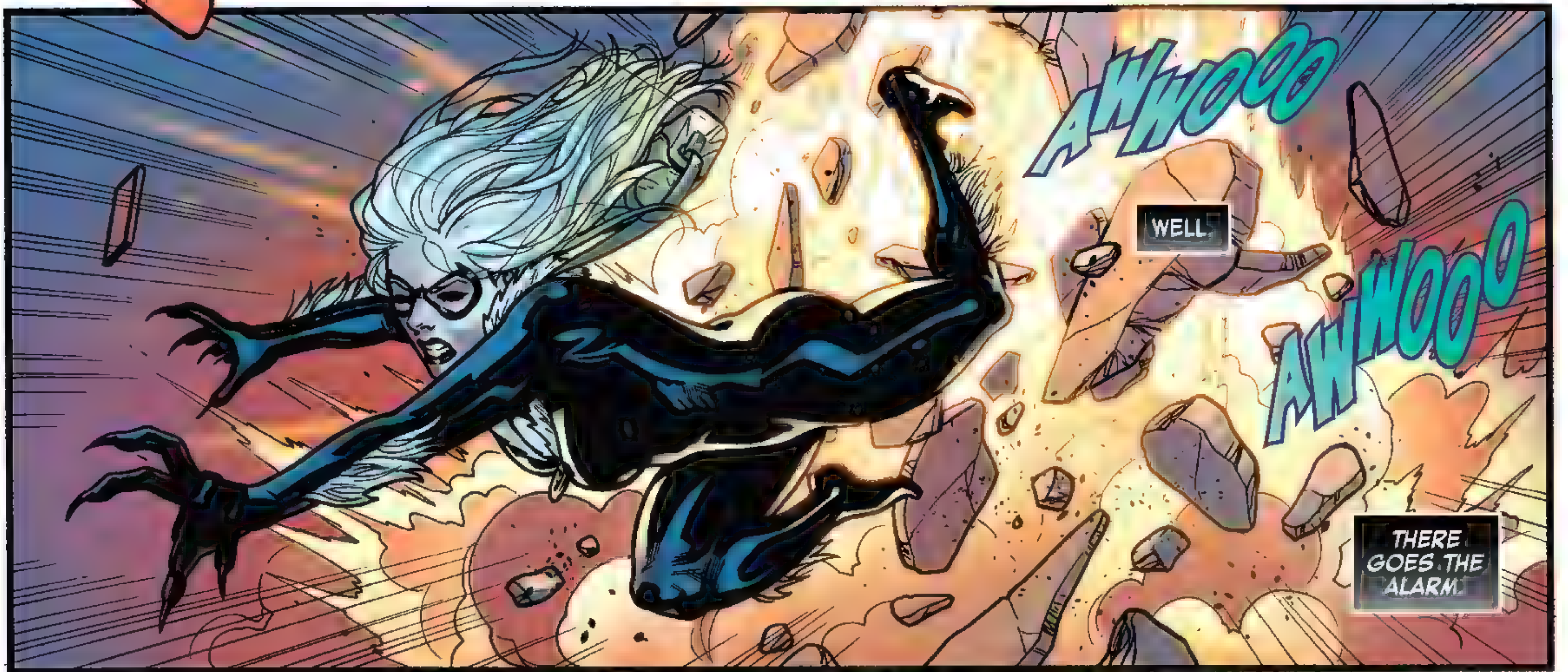
WHAT?! WHY?!

WHEN I GET BORED, I START WANTING A DRINK. I NEED THINGS TO OCCUPY MYSELF.

COOL. GREAT. NOW THAT WE'VE ESTABLISHED THAT I DIDN'T STEAL IT, CAN I GET ON WITH MY LIFE?



BECAUSE I'M ON A *JOB* RIGHT NOW, AND AS NEAR AS I CAN TELL, NONE OF THIS IS--



HELLO,
FELICIA.

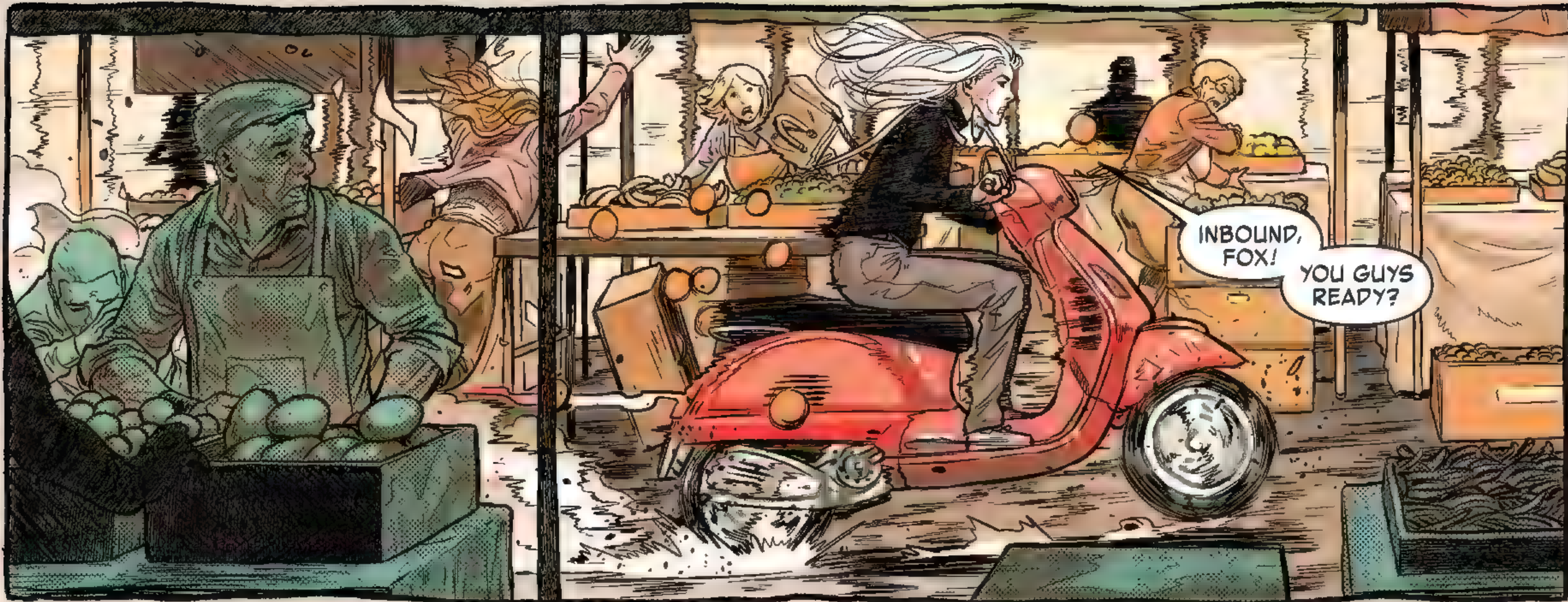
AWWOOO

AWWOOO

AWWOOO

IT WOULD APPEAR
THAT THIS IS MY
PROBLEM AFTER ALL.





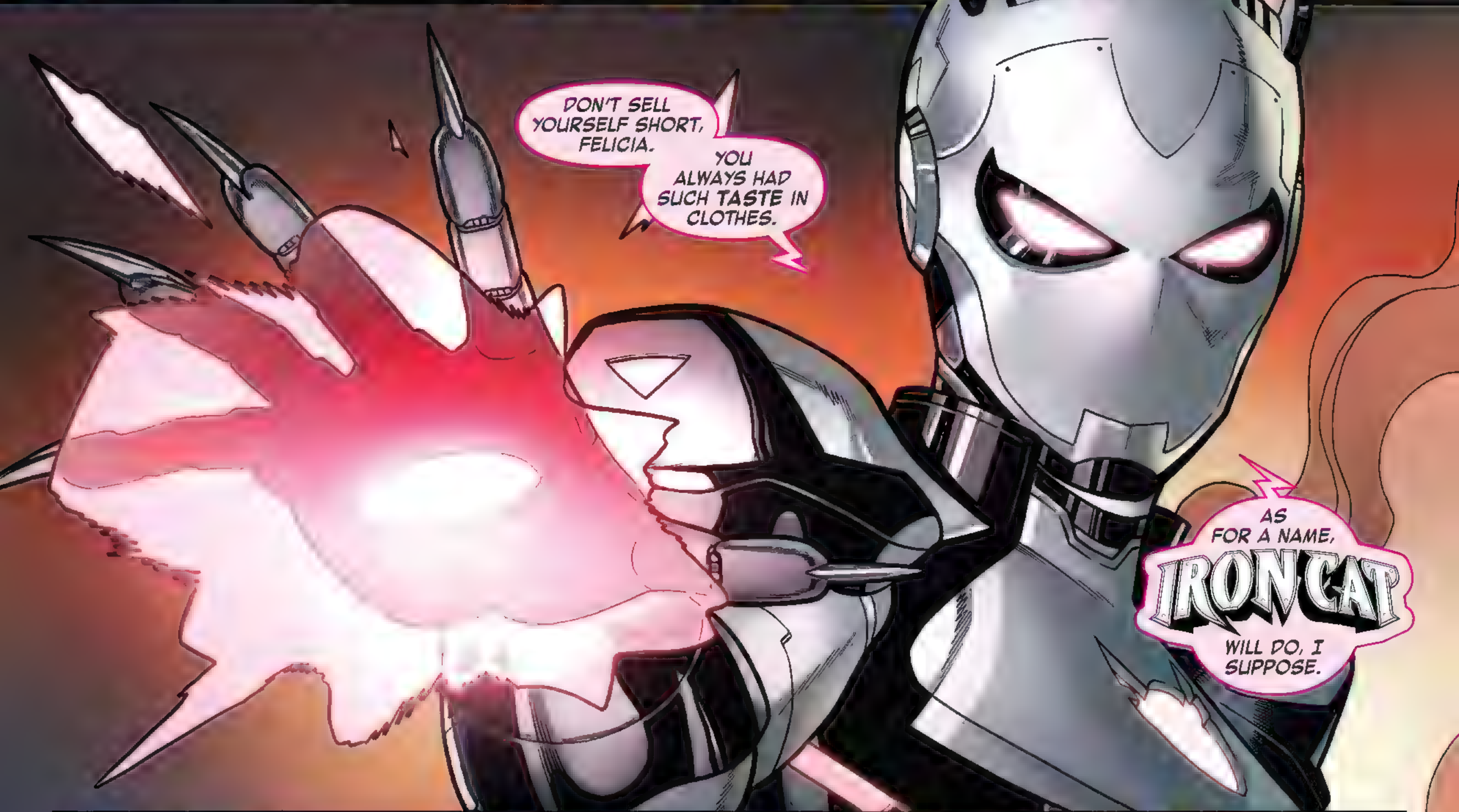
SKREEE



THERE'S
A PROBLEM WITH
THE ESCAPE ROUTE,
TAMARA.



SO, WHO ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO BE, SHOWING UP AT MY JOB, WEARING MY OLD OUTFIT?



DON'T SELL YOURSELF SHORT, FELICIA.

YOU ALWAYS HAD SUCH TASTE IN CLOTHES.

AS FOR A NAME, **IRON CAT** WILL DO, I SUPPOSE.



LISTEN, YOU'RE WELCOME TO WHATEVER ELSE IS IN THE VAULT, I JUST WANT THE DIAMOND--



YEEK!

WHAT IS
GOING ON.

WHAT HAS
HAPPENED TO
MY LIFE.

STARK THINKS
I STOLE THE
IRON CAT.

THE IRON CAT--
WHOEVER THEY
ARE--IS TRYING
TO KILL ME.



WHY IS
EVERYONE
ON MY ASS
TONIGHT?

WHAT THE HELL
DID I DO?

THE IRON
CAT'S FAST
AS HELL

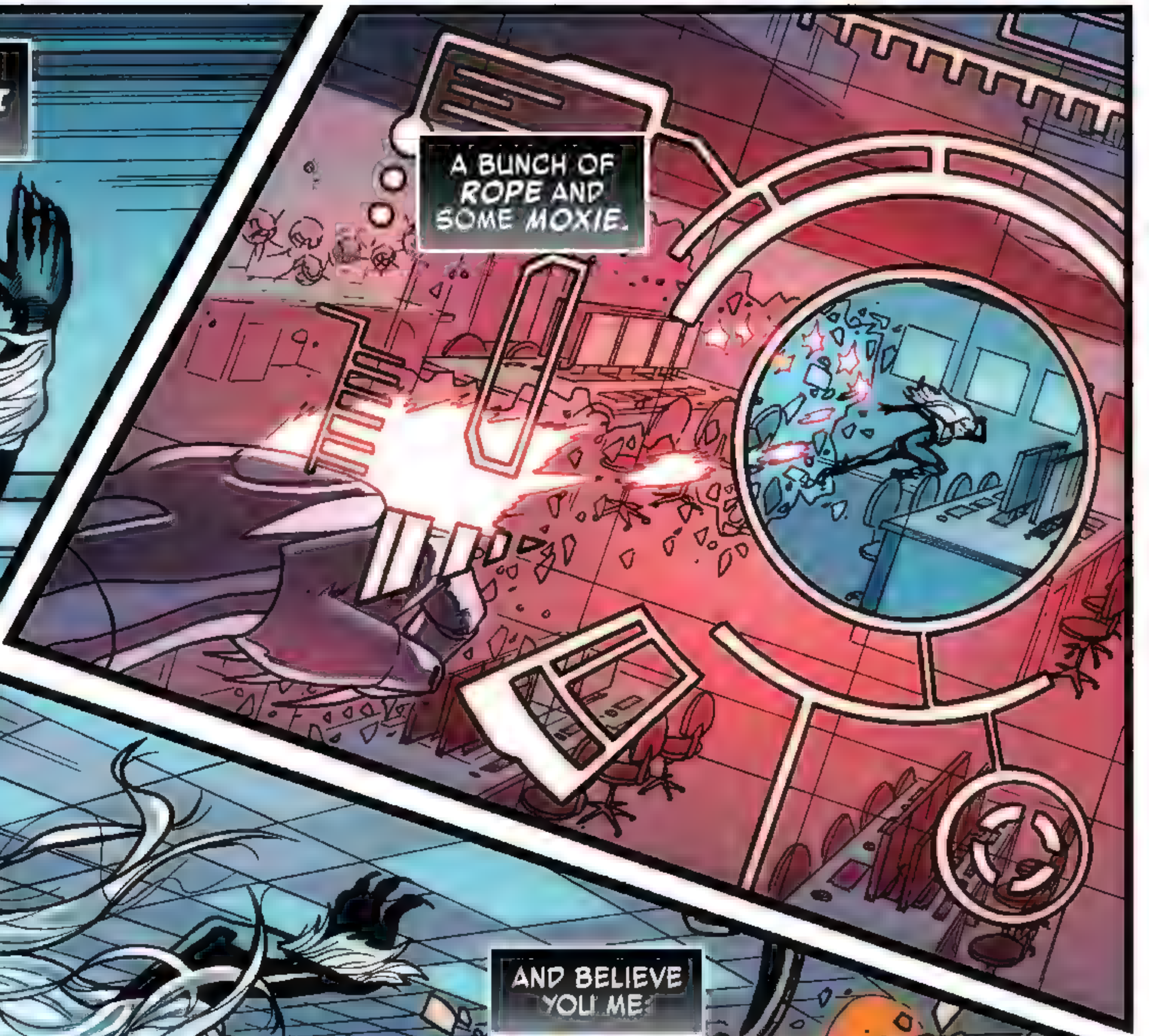
I SHOULD KNOW--
I DESIGNED IT. (WITH THE
HELP OF A STARK EXPERT
SYSTEM, OF COURSE).

USED TO BE, THAT WAS ALL
IT HAD GOING FOR IT--IT
WAS ALL SPEED, ECM, AND
CLAWS. NO REPULSORS, NO
LIFE SUPPORT, BARELY ANY
ARMOR TO SPEAK OF.

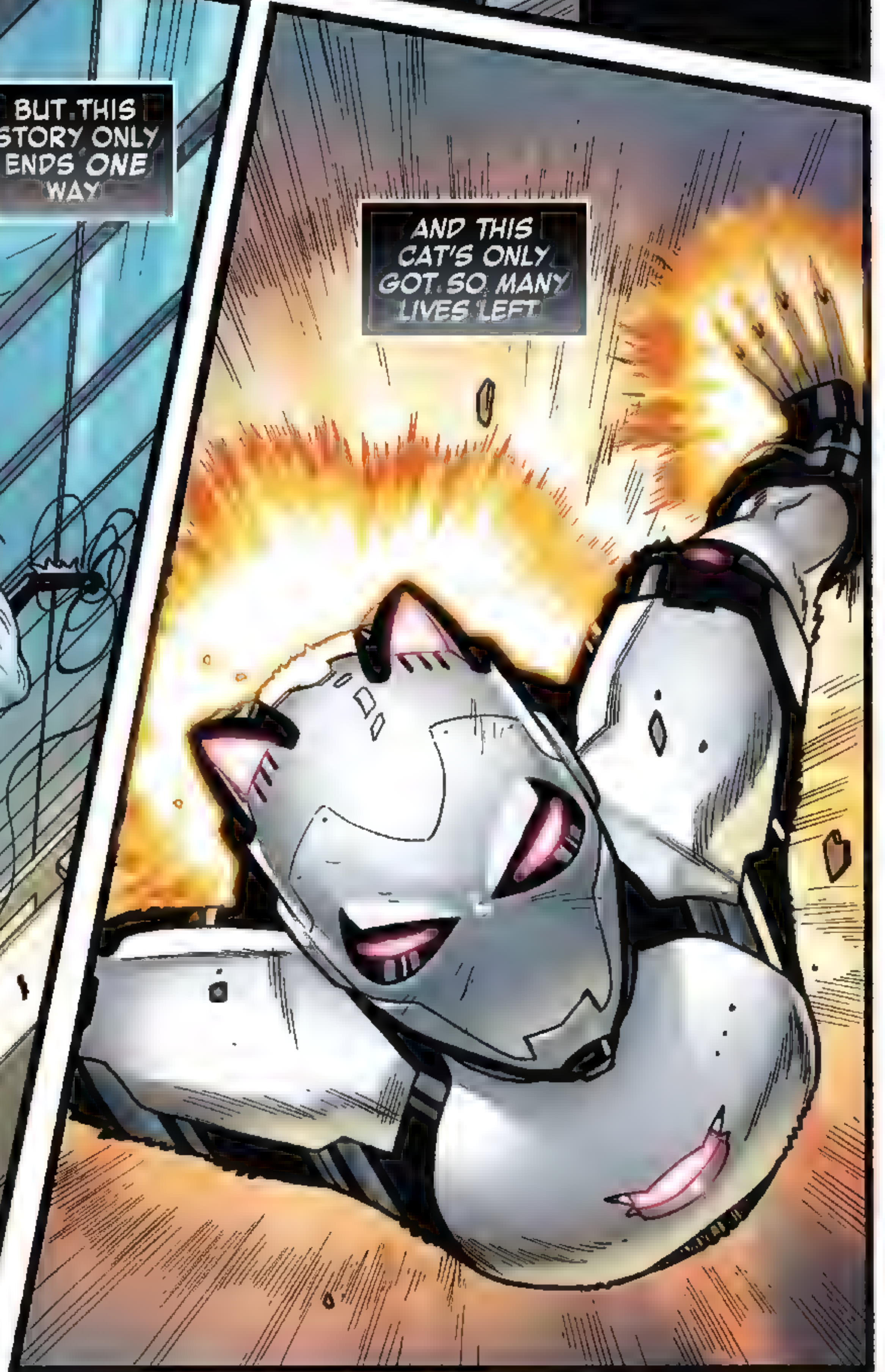
BUT STARK **REBUILT** IT.
AND STARK IS A HELL OF
A LOT BETTER AT PLAYING
DRESS-UP POLLIES WITH
WEARABLE WMPDS THAN I AM.

WHAT I'M SAYING
IS: I HAVE NO IDEA
WHAT IT'S CAPABLE
OF NOW.

WHAT I'M
SAYING IS:
I'M TOAST



BUT THIS
STORY ONLY
ENDS ONE
WAY.



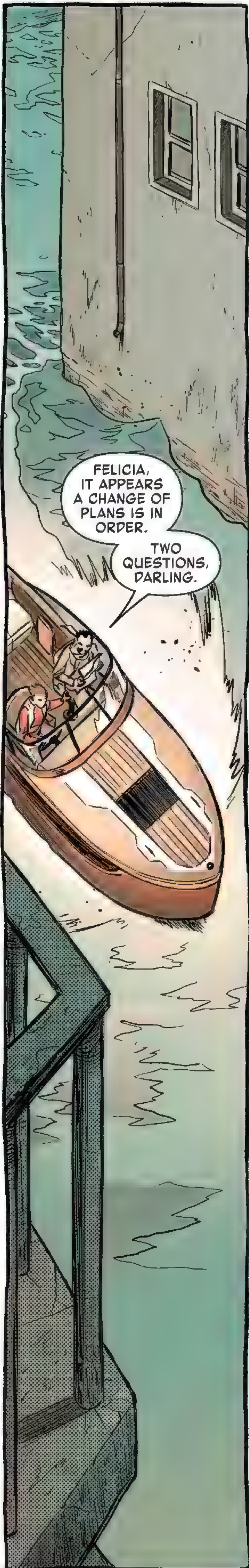


FOX! FELICIA'S
ESCAPE ROUTE IS
BLOCKED! SHE
CAN'T MAKE IT TO
THE DOCKS!



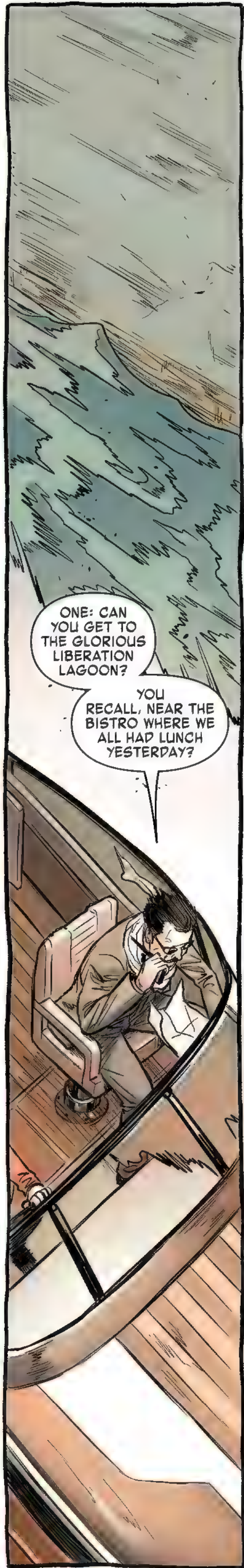
HM.

UNFORTUNATE,
BUT NOT DEADLY.
GIVE ME THE
RADIO.



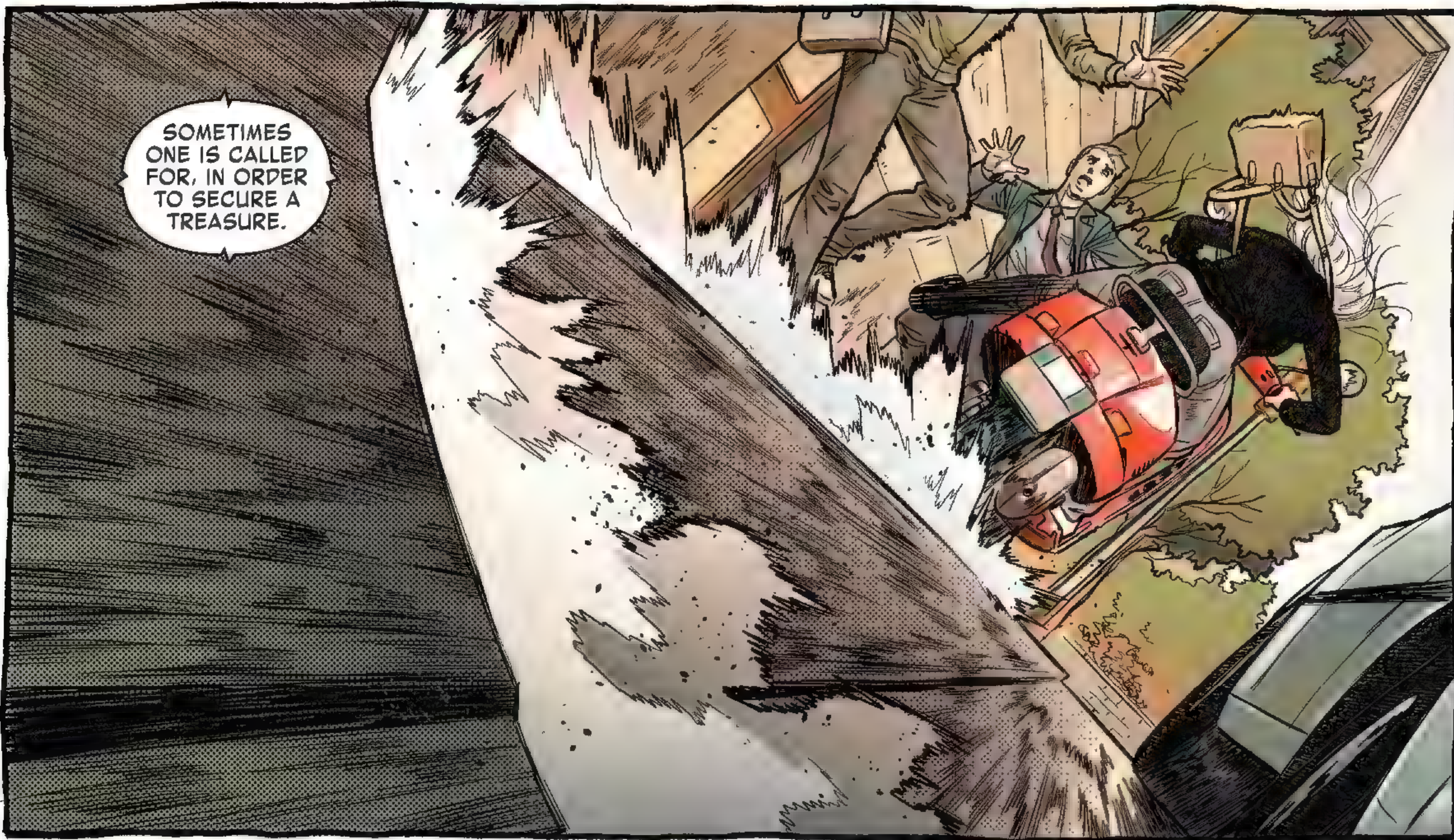
FELICIA,
IT APPEARS
A CHANGE OF
PLANS IS IN
ORDER.

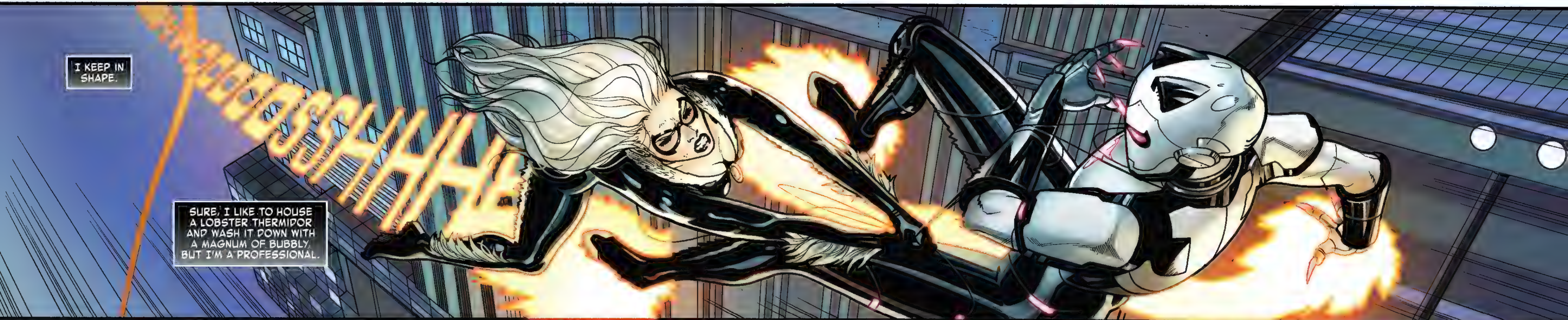
TWO
QUESTIONS,
DARLING.



ONE: CAN
YOU GET TO
THE GLORIOUS
LIBERATION
LAGOON?

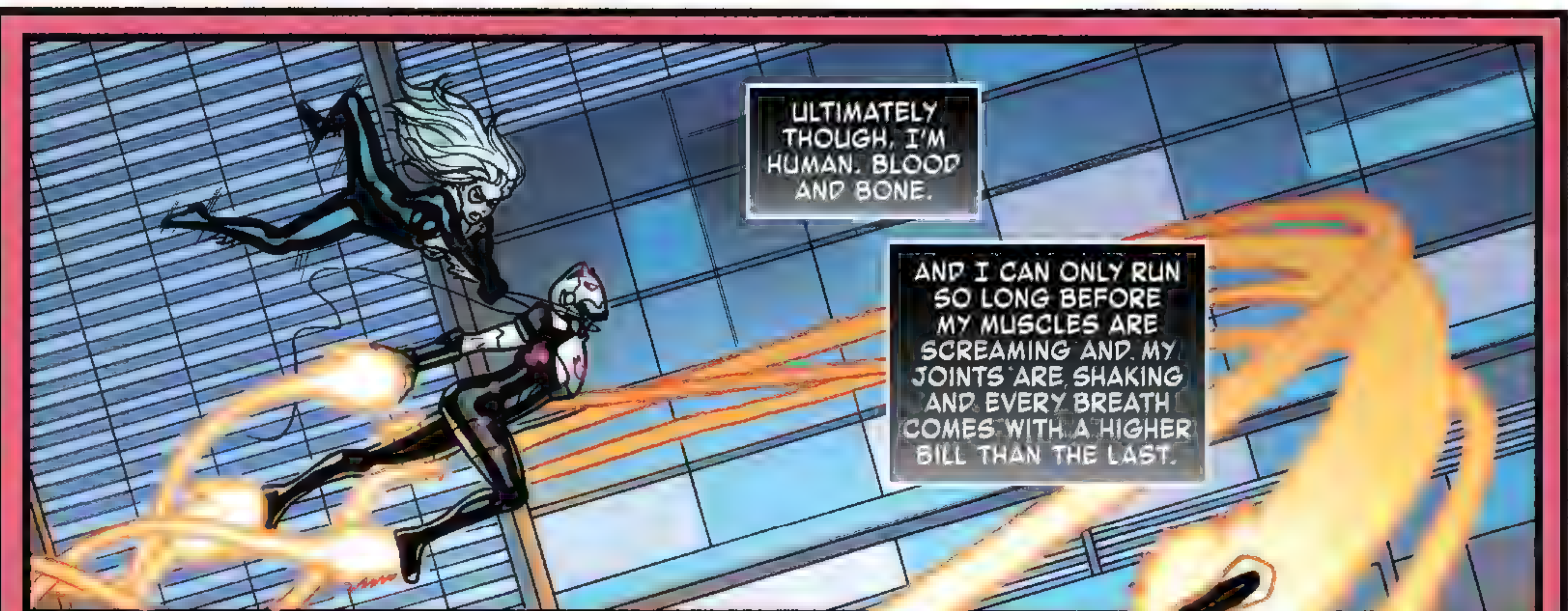
YOU
RECALL, NEAR THE
BISTRO WHERE WE
ALL HAD LUNCH
YESTERDAY?





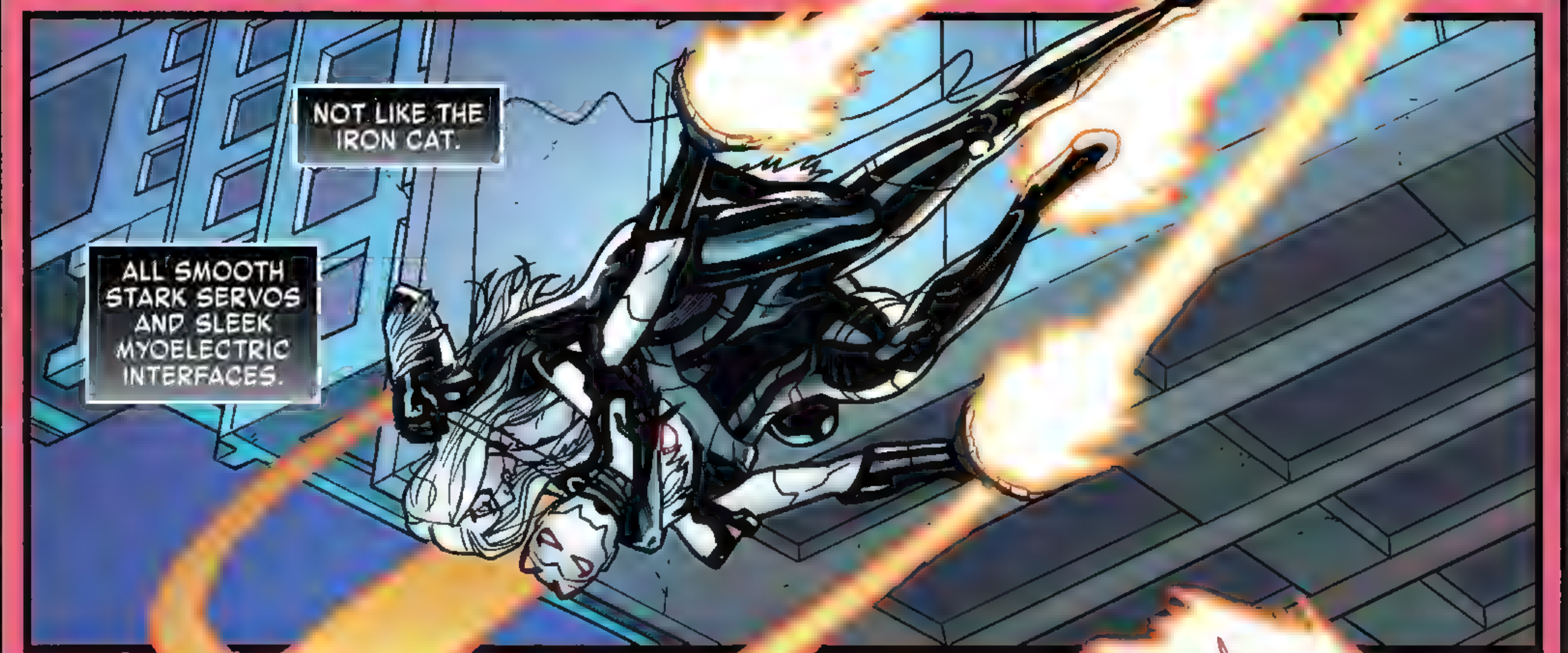
I KEEP IN
SHAPE.

SURE, I LIKE TO HOUSE
A LOBSTER THERMIDOR
AND WASH IT DOWN WITH
A MAGNUM OF BUBBLY,
BUT I'M A PROFESSIONAL.



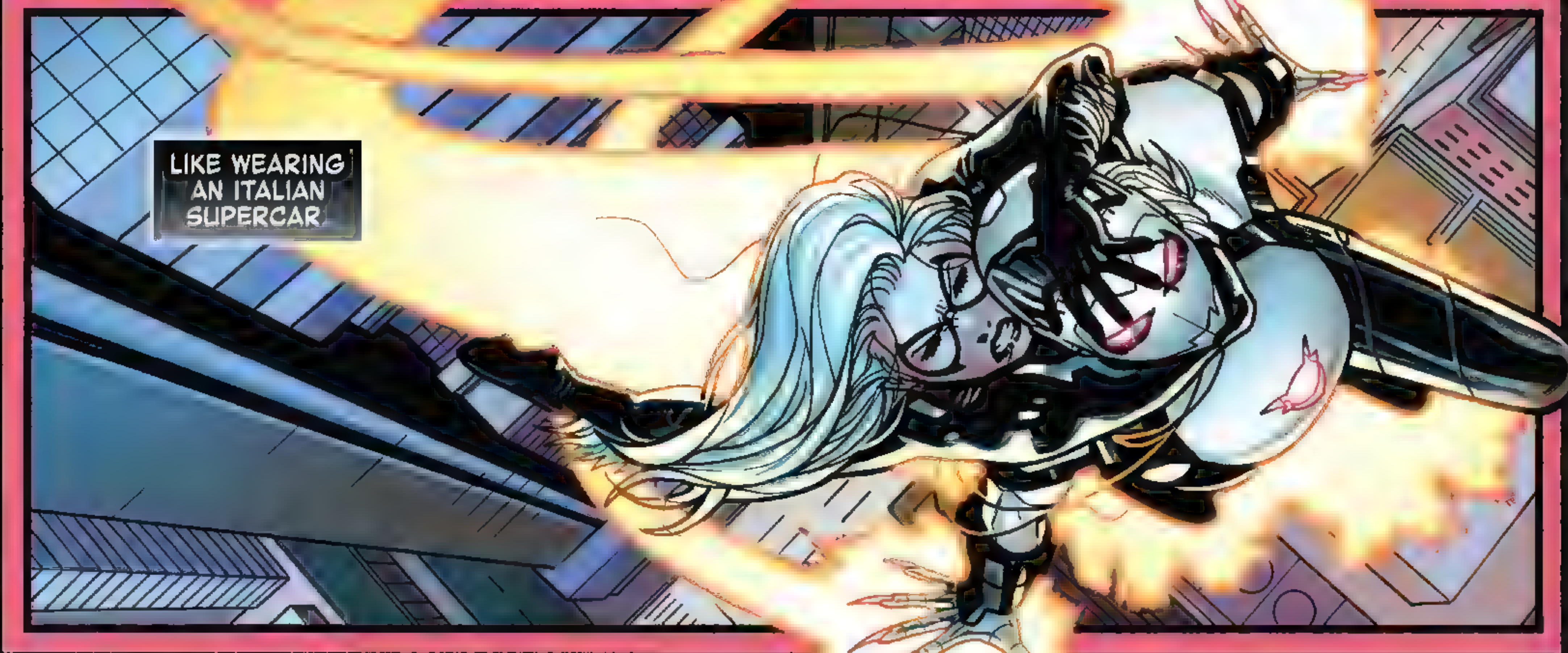
ULTIMATELY
THOUGH, I'M
HUMAN. BLOOD
AND BONE.

AND I CAN ONLY RUN
SO LONG BEFORE
MY MUSCLES ARE
SCREAMING AND MY
JOINTS ARE SHAKING
AND EVERY BREATH
COMES WITH A HIGHER
BILL THAN THE LAST.

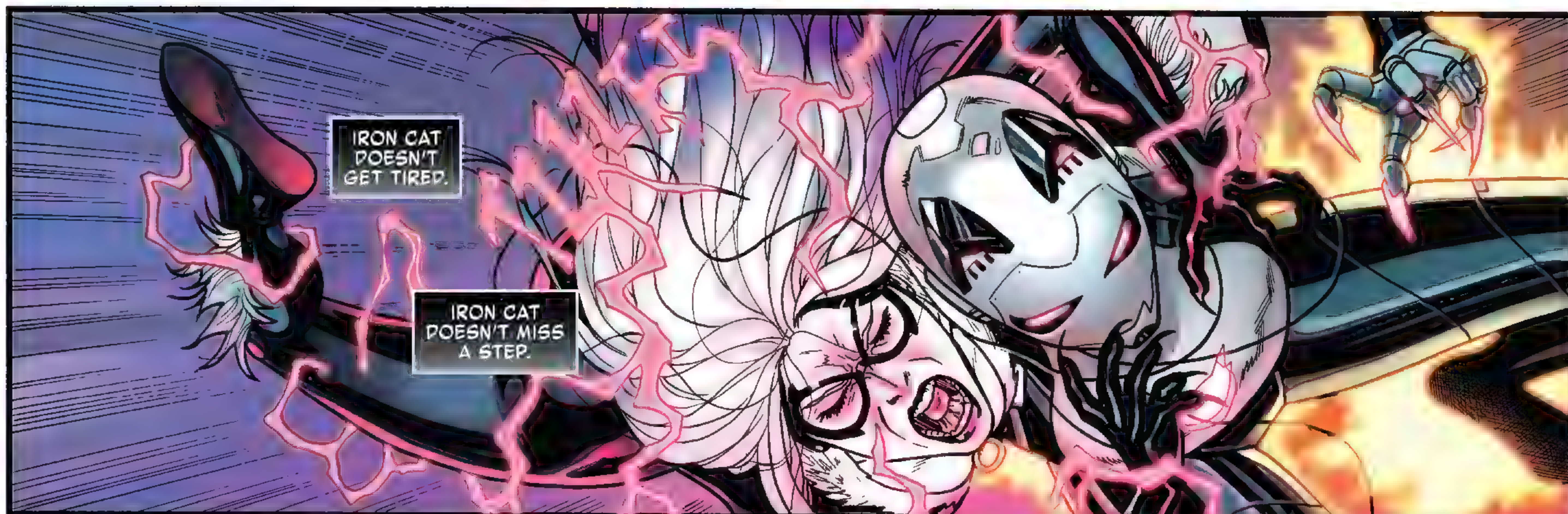


NOT LIKE THE
IRON CAT.

ALL SMOOTH
STARK SERVOS
AND SLEEK
MYOELECTRIC
INTERFACES.



LIKE WEARING
AN ITALIAN
SUPERCAR.



IRON CAT
DOESN'T
GET TIRED.

IRON CAT
DOESN'T MISS
A STEP.



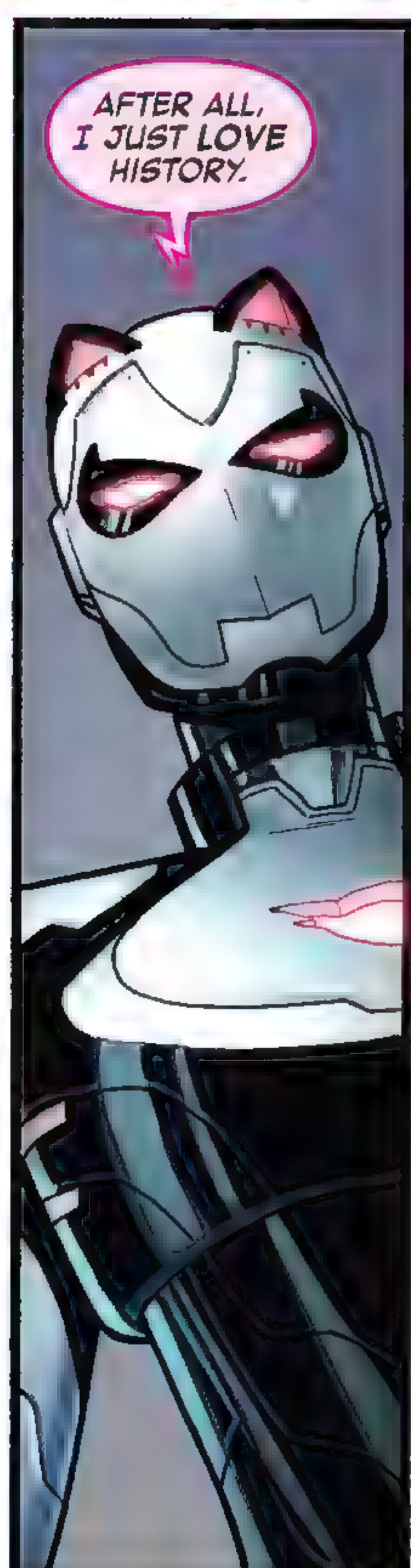
SHEFF-
SHEFF-
FINE.

YOU
CAN HAVE THE
DIAMOND. WOULDN'T
BE THE FIRST TIME
I'VE HAD TO GIVE
IT UP.

HNN.



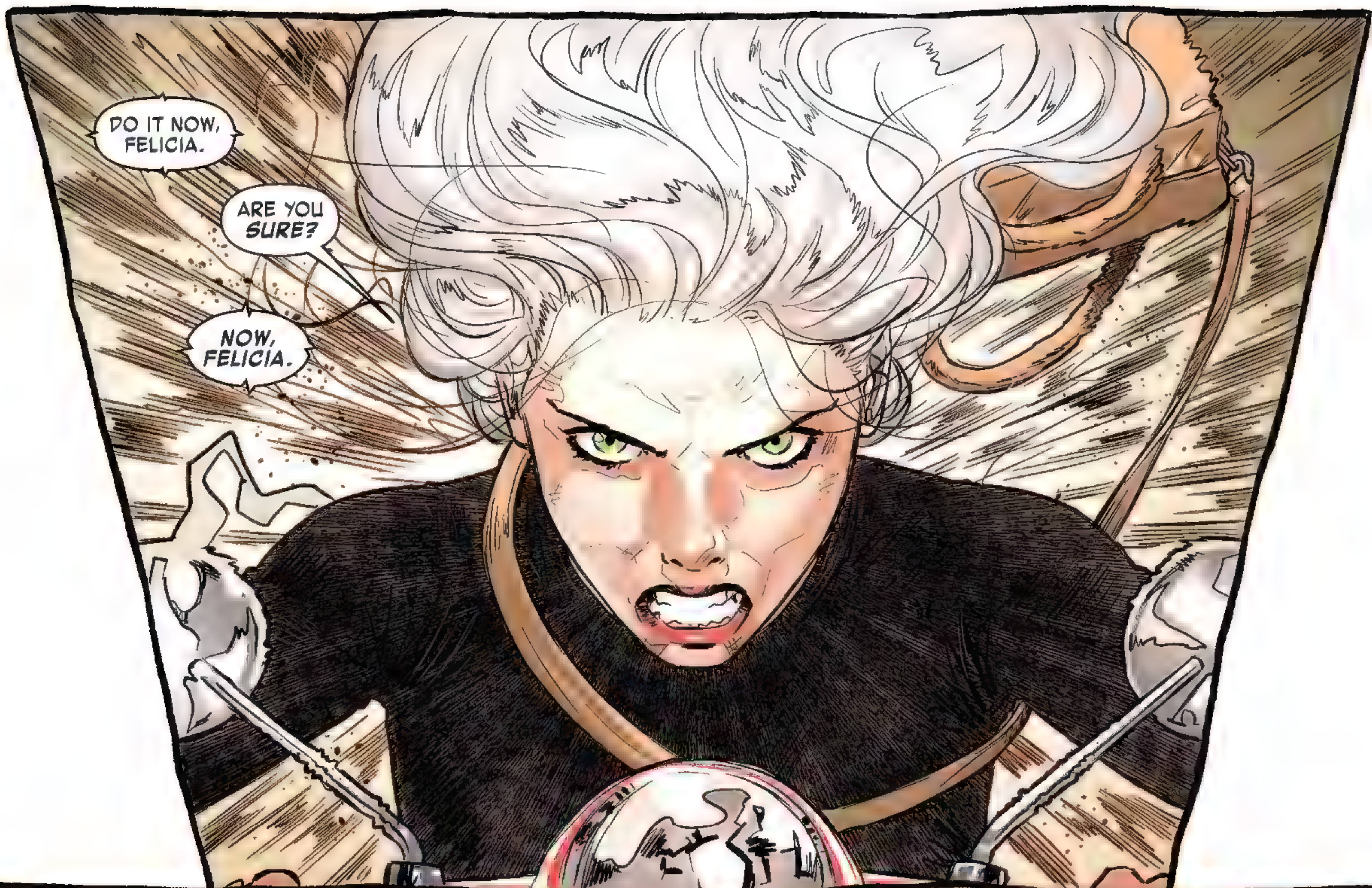
SO YOU
DO REMEMBER
THE FIRST TIME.
PERSHYY MISTO,
CARNELIA.



AFTER ALL,
I JUST LOVE
HISTORY.



NO
WAY.



DO IT NOW,
FELICIA.

ARE YOU
SURE?

NOW,
FELICIA.

DAMMIT.

GO
ON, TAKE
THE DAMN
DIAMOND
BACK!



YOU
GOING TO BE
THERE FOR ME,
TAMARA?

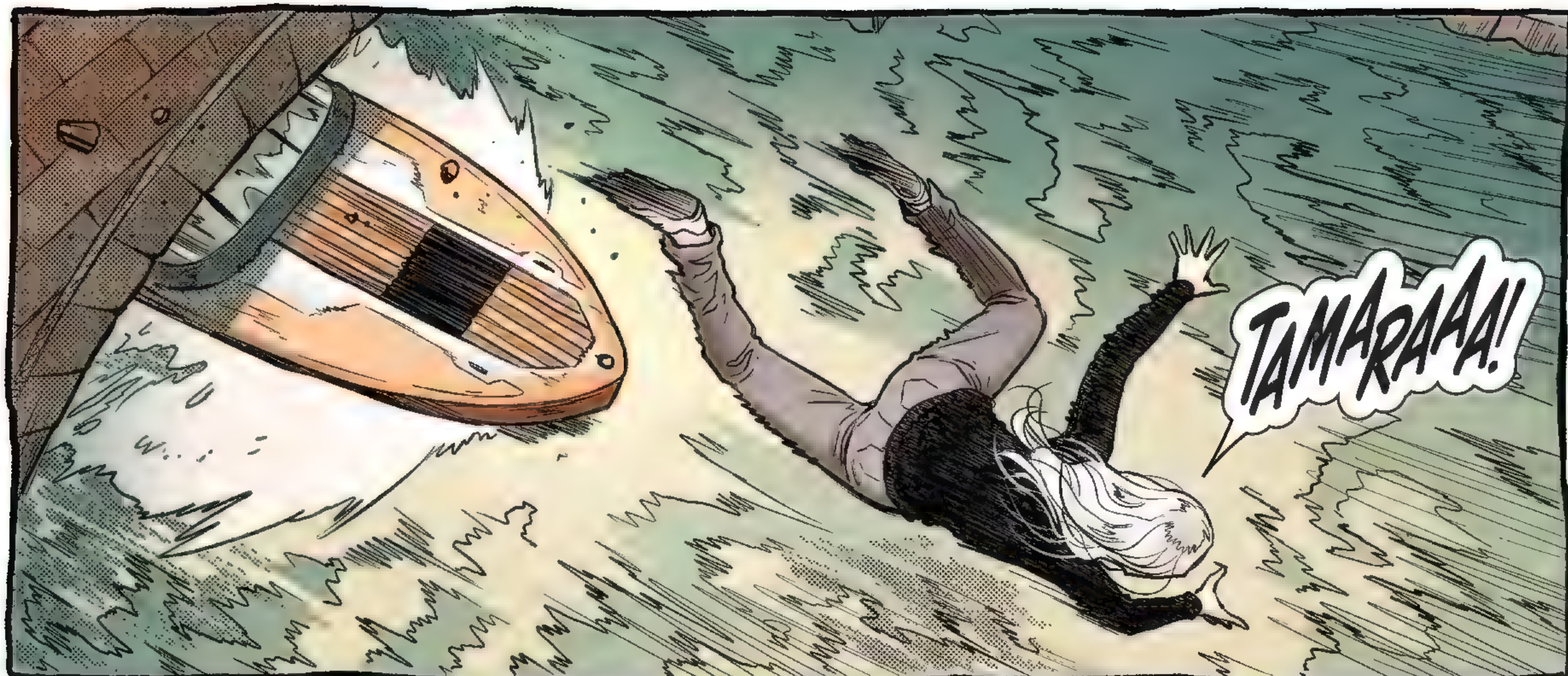
ALWAYS.

YEAH,
I KNOW.

READY ON
MY MARK.

MARK!

KRNCCHH



TAMARA!!



FELICIA!!



"DO YOU REMEMBER
WHAT HE SAID?"

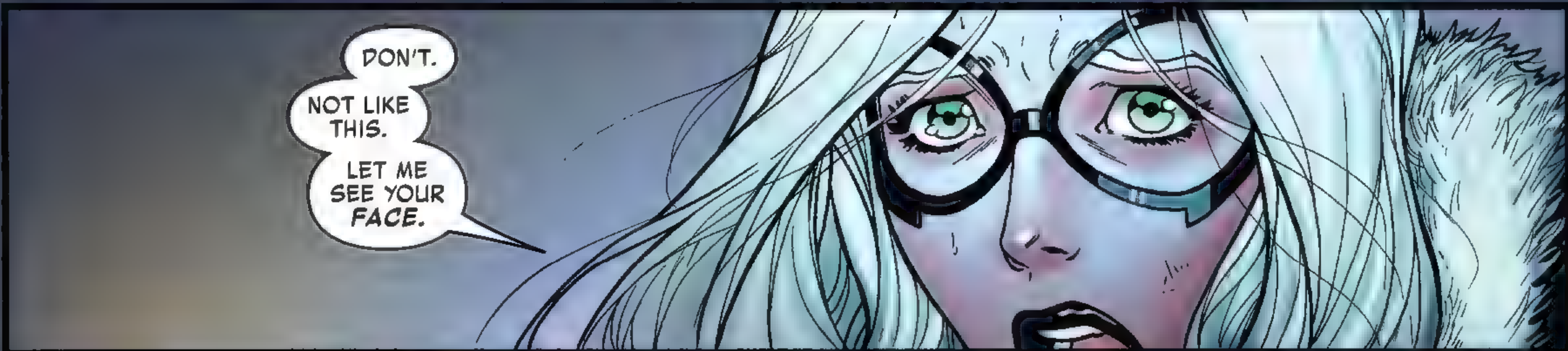
"SOMETIMES
A SACRIFICE MUST
BE MADE, IN ORDER
TO SECURE THE
TREASURE."



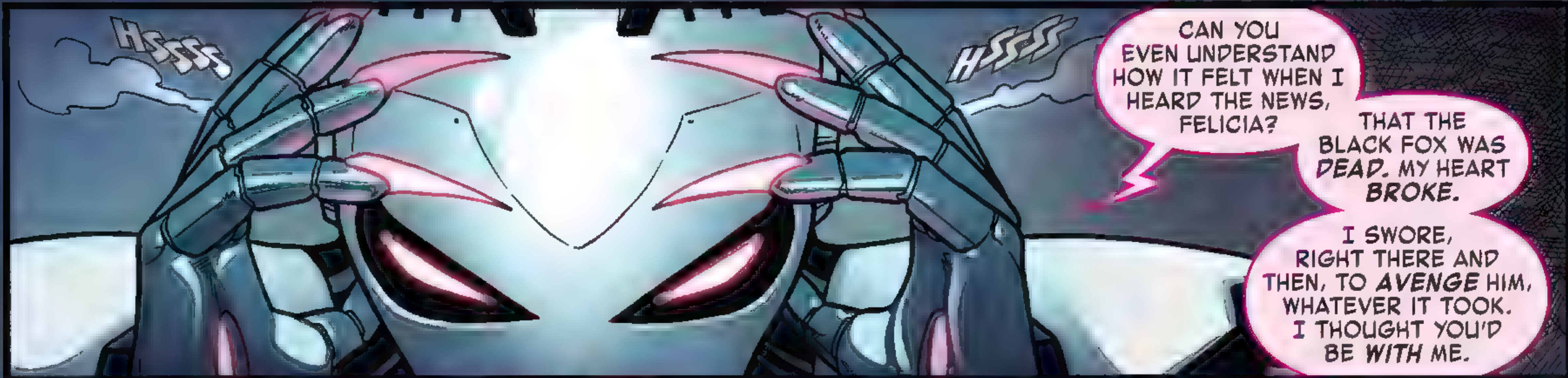
HE DIDN'T CARE ABOUT THE DIAMOND, FELICIA.

THAT'S WHY HE TOLD YOU TO LEAVE IT BEHIND. TO HOLD OFF THE COPS-- SO WE COULD ESCAPE.

YOU WERE THE TREASURE HE COULDN'T BEAR TO LOSE.



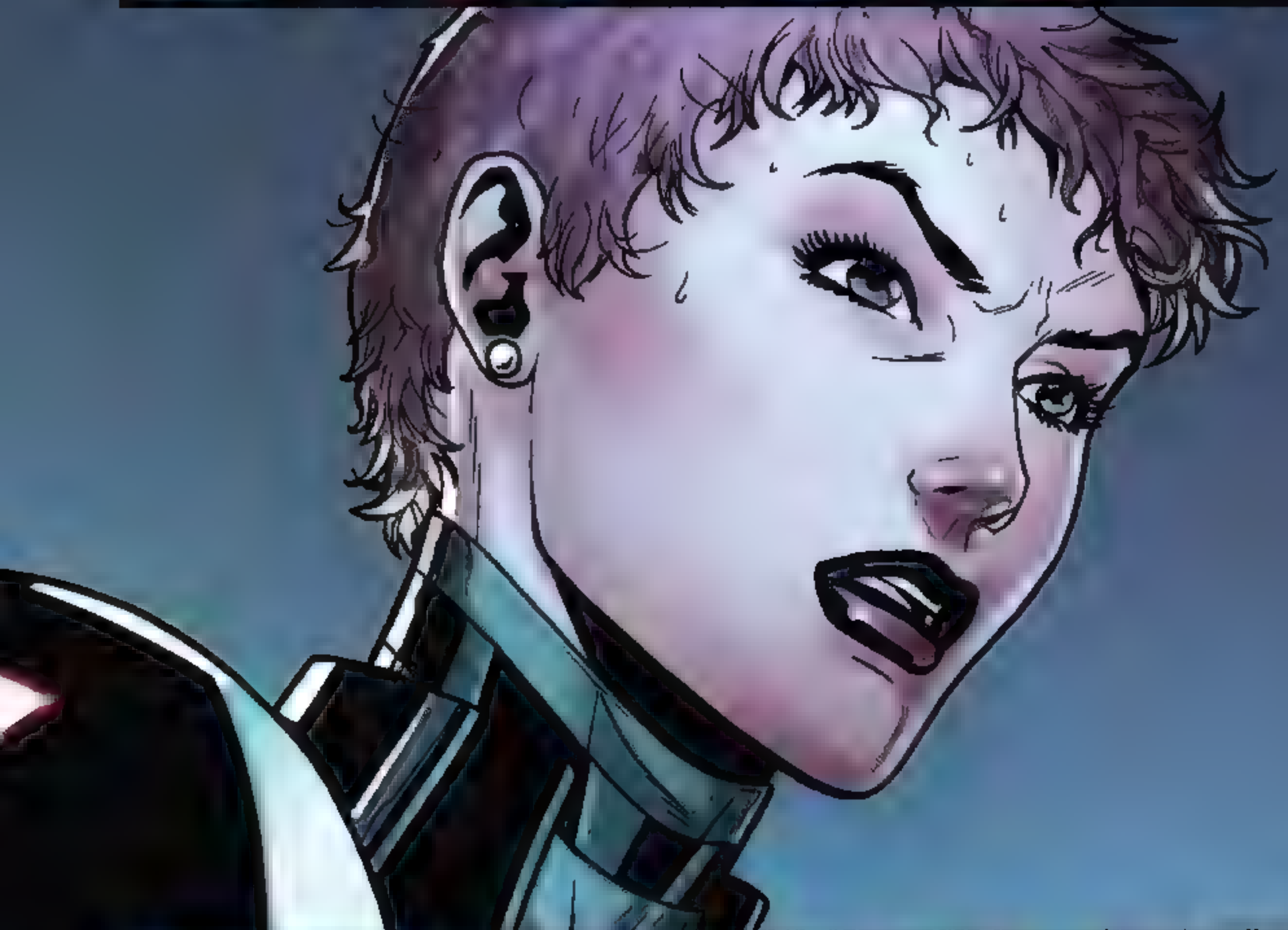
DON'T.
NOT LIKE THIS.
LET ME SEE YOUR FACE.



CAN YOU EVEN UNDERSTAND HOW IT FELT WHEN I HEARD THE NEWS, FELICIA?

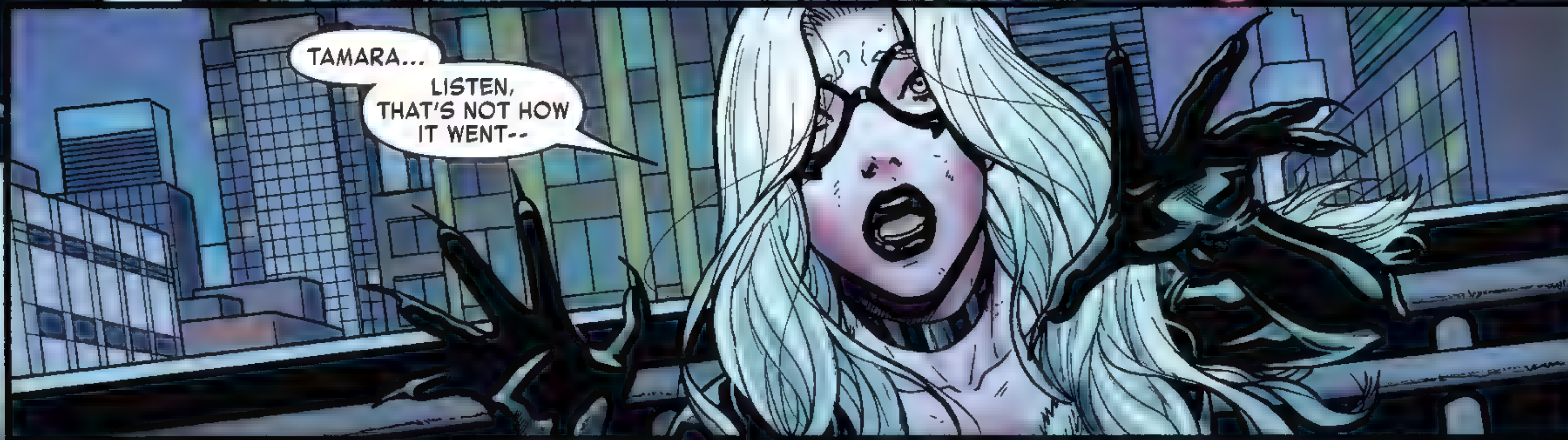
THAT THE BLACK FOX WAS DEAD. MY HEART BROKE.

I SWORE, RIGHT THERE AND THEN, TO AVENGE HIM, WHATEVER IT TOOK. I THOUGHT YOU'D BE WITH ME.



BUT THEN LATER, TO FIND OUT THAT YOU KILLED HIM?!

**TAMARA BLAKE.
THE IRON CAT.
INTERNATIONAL THIEF.
NOW OCCUPIED WITH REVENGE.**



TAMARA...
LISTEN, THAT'S NOT HOW IT WENT--

THEN
TELL ME THAT
YOU'RE NOT
RESPONSIBLE,
FELICIA.

I CAN'T LIE TO HER.
I NEVER COULD.

SHE KNOWS ALL
MY TELLS. ALL THE
SECRETS OF MY
HEART, BETTER
THAN ANYONE.

I AM
RESPONSIBLE.
I DID IT.

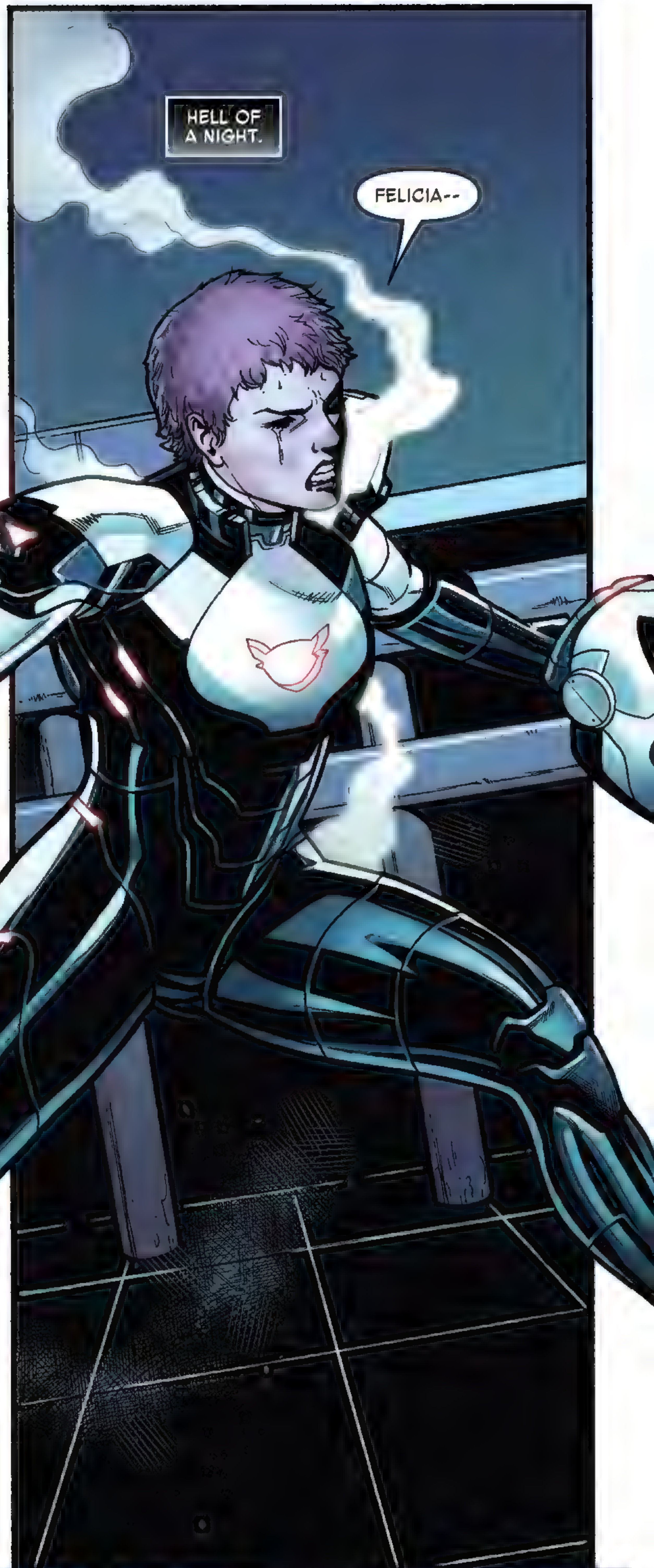
AND SHE'S GEARED
TO KILL ME RIGHT
HERE FOR IT.

BUT SHE'S
NOT WEARING
HER HELMET

I'M SORRY,
TAMARA.

FLASH

YAAAAAHHH!!

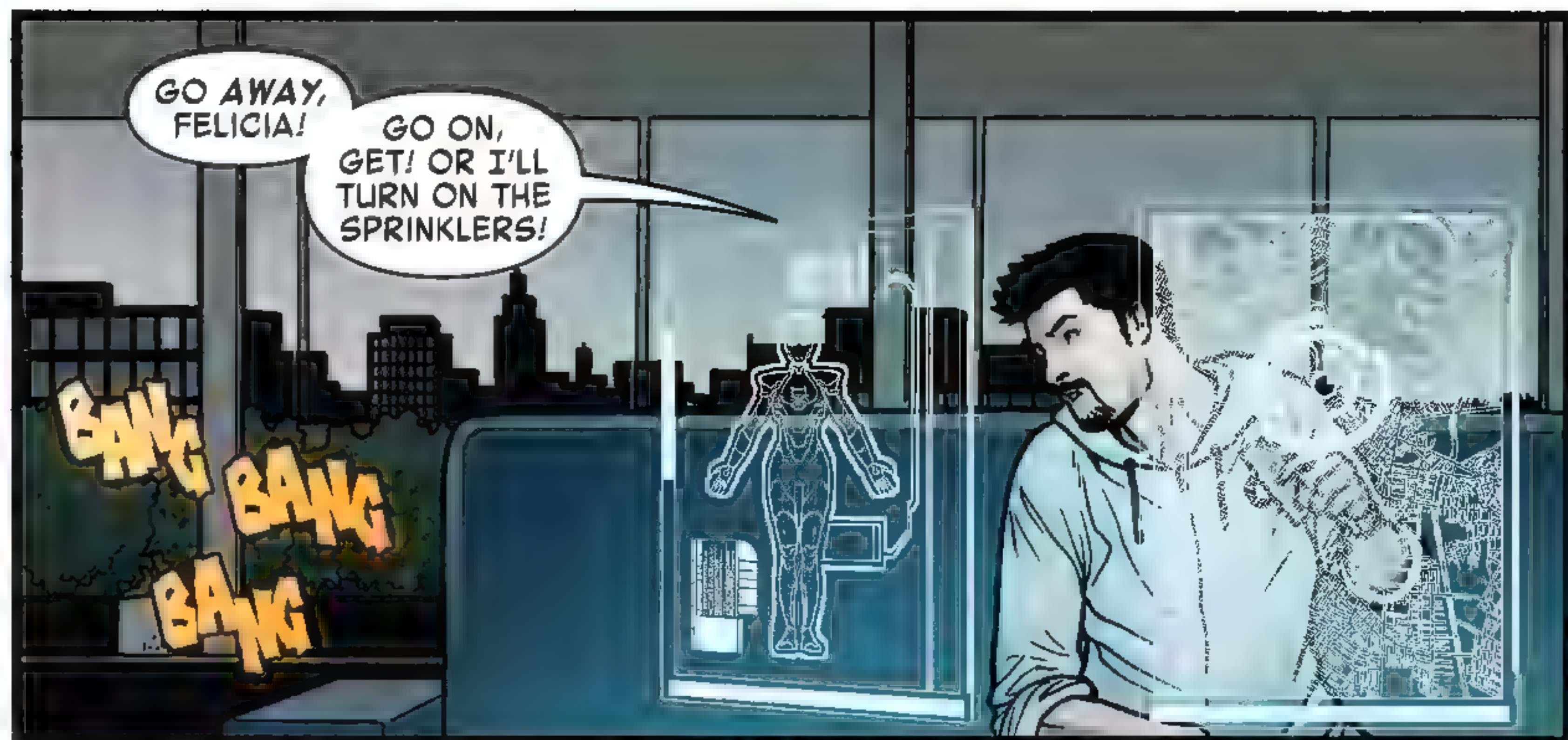




MR. STARK,
YOU HAVE A
VISITOR.

NO
FOOLIN'.

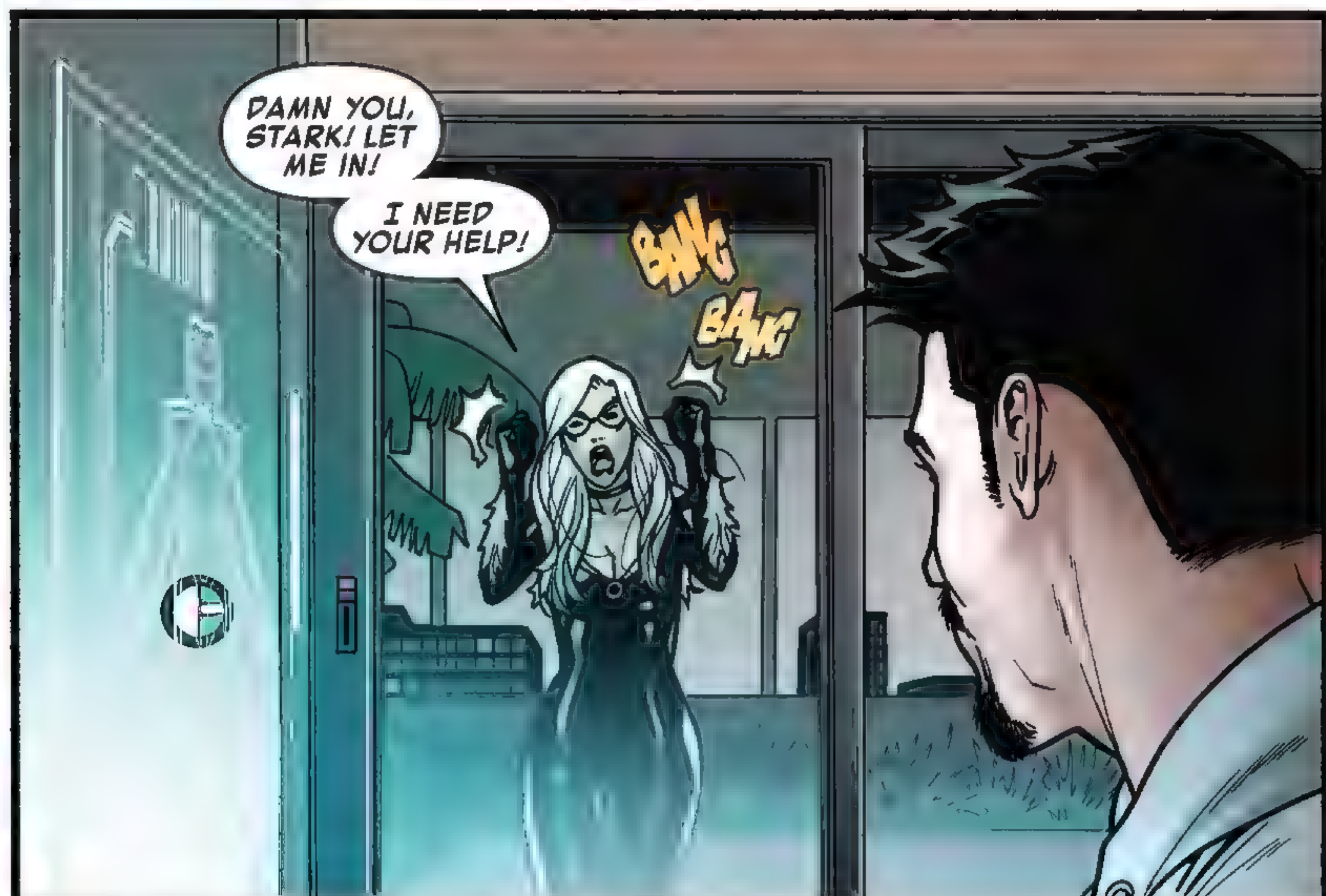
BANG BANG
BANG



GO AWAY,
FELICIA!

GO ON,
GET! OR I'LL
TURN ON THE
SPRINKLERS!

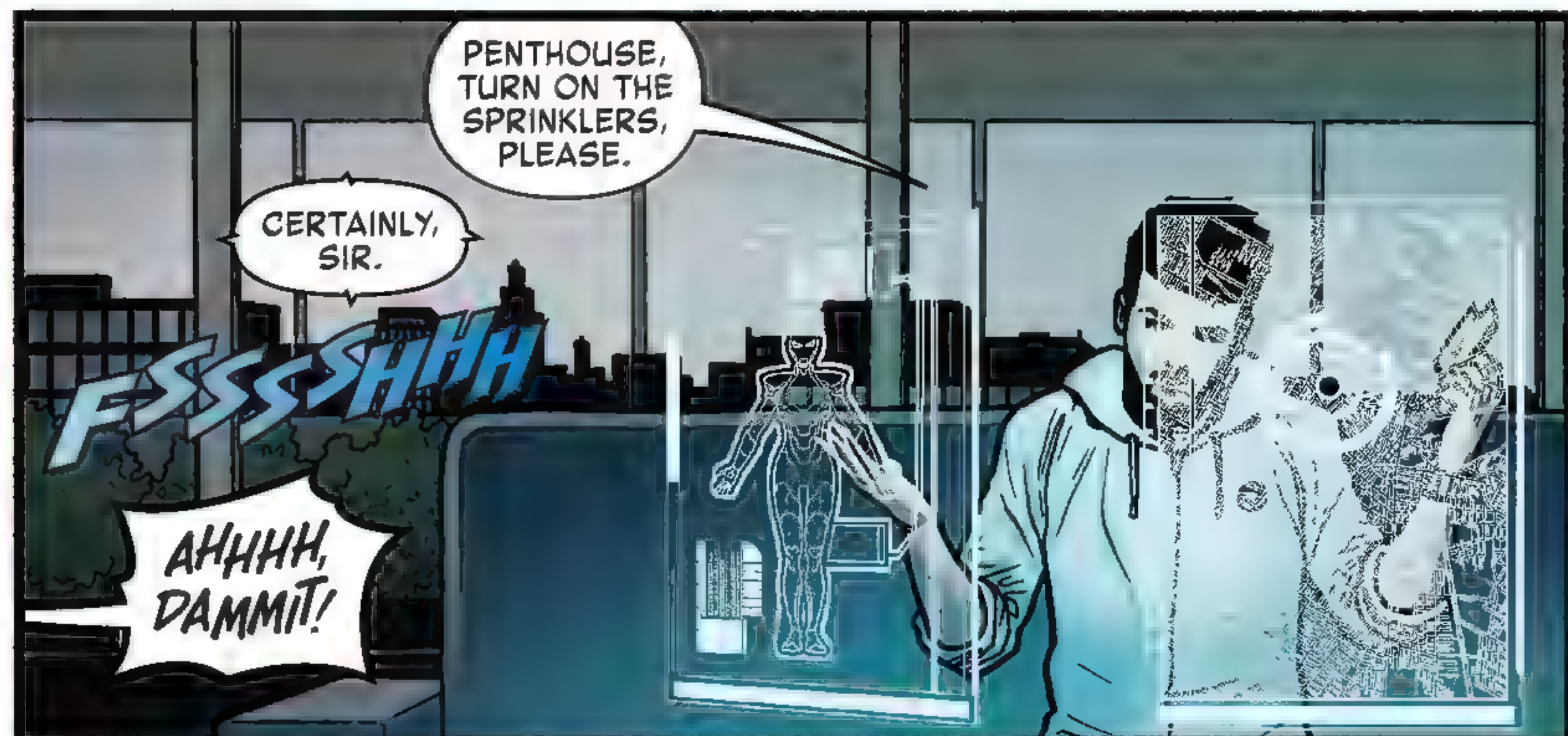
BANG BANG
BANG



DAMN YOU,
STARK! LET
ME IN!

I NEED
YOUR HELP!

BANG BANG

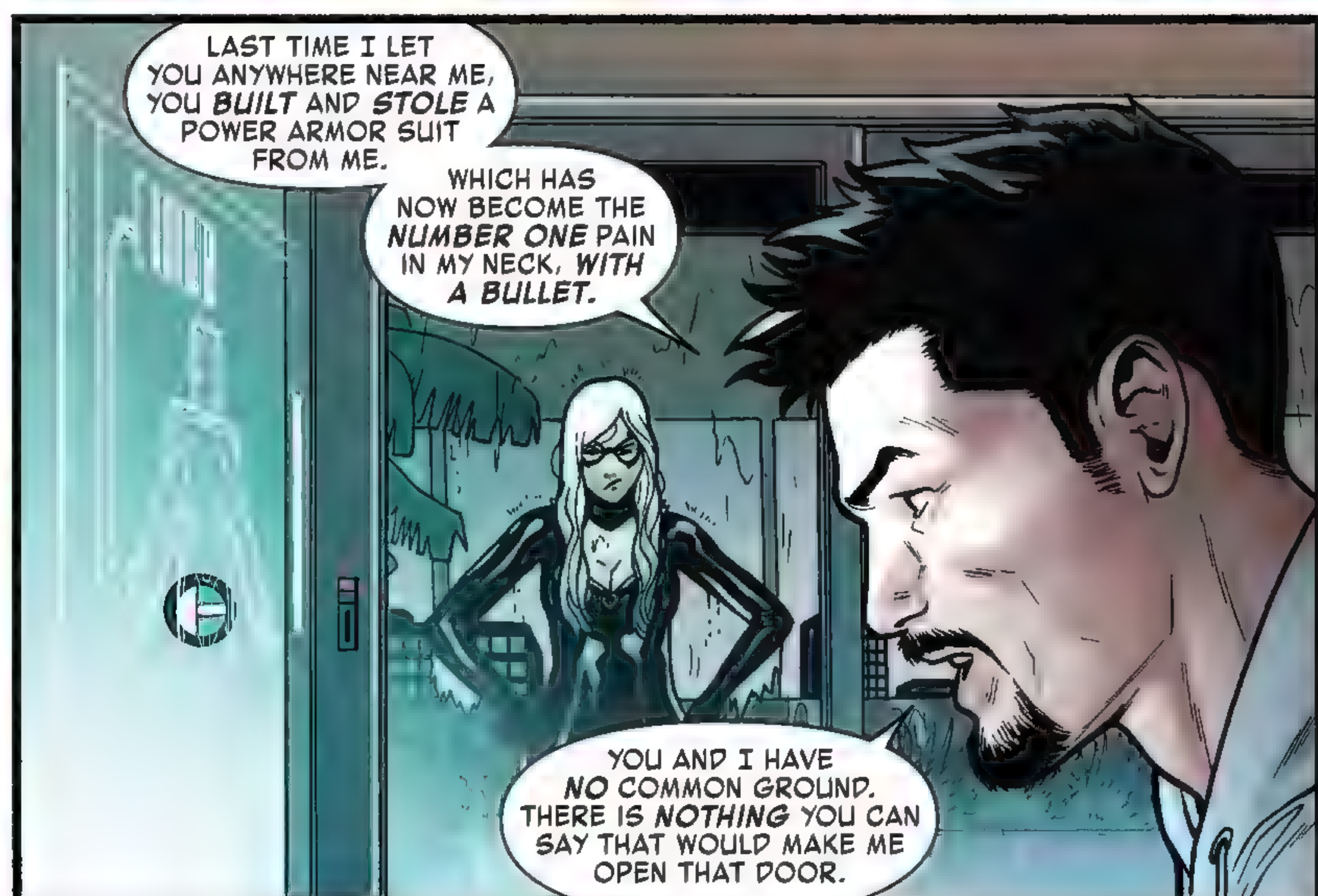


PENTHOUSE,
TURN ON THE
SPRINKLERS,
PLEASE.

CERTAINLY,
SIR.

FSSSSHHH

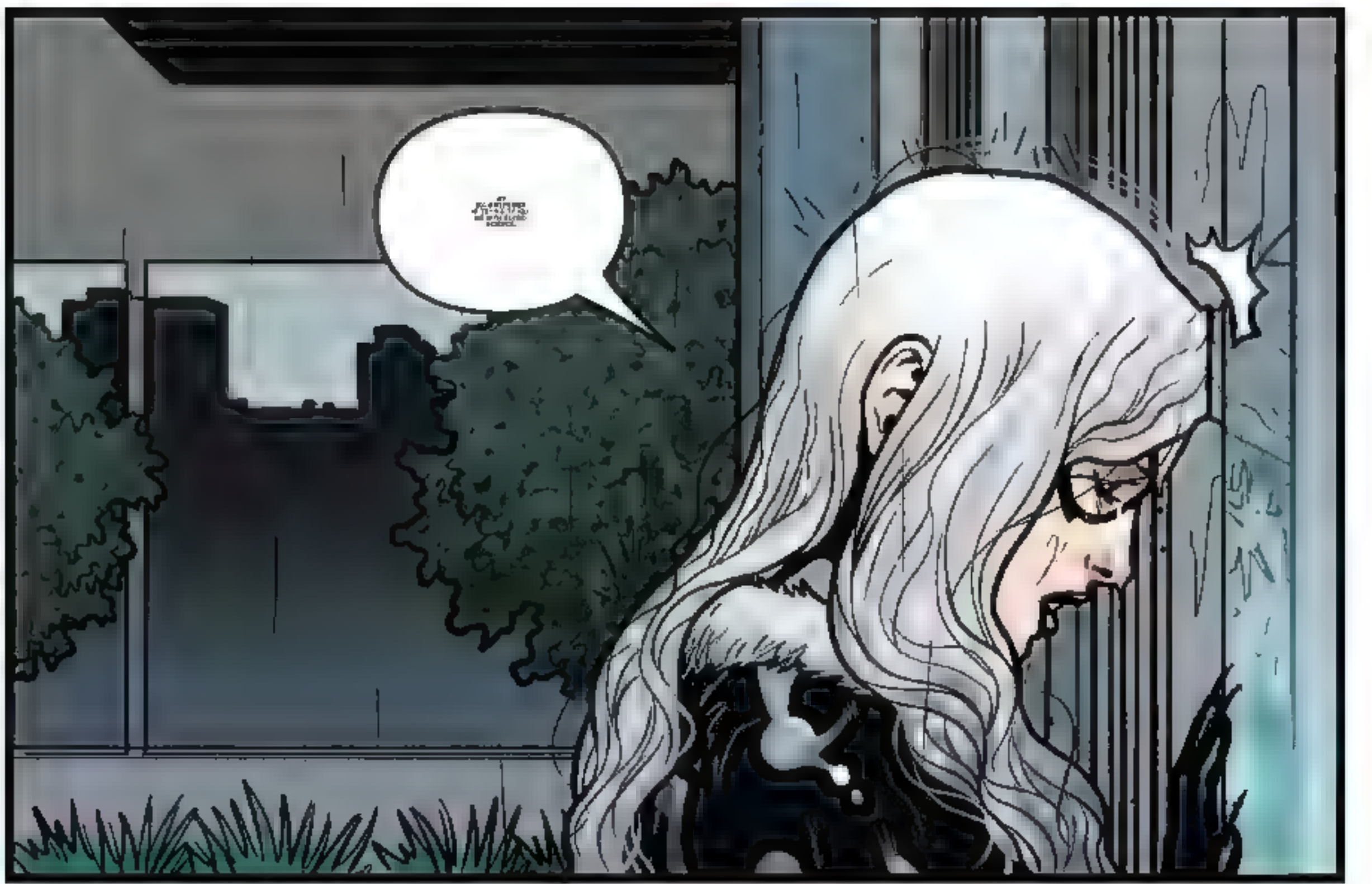
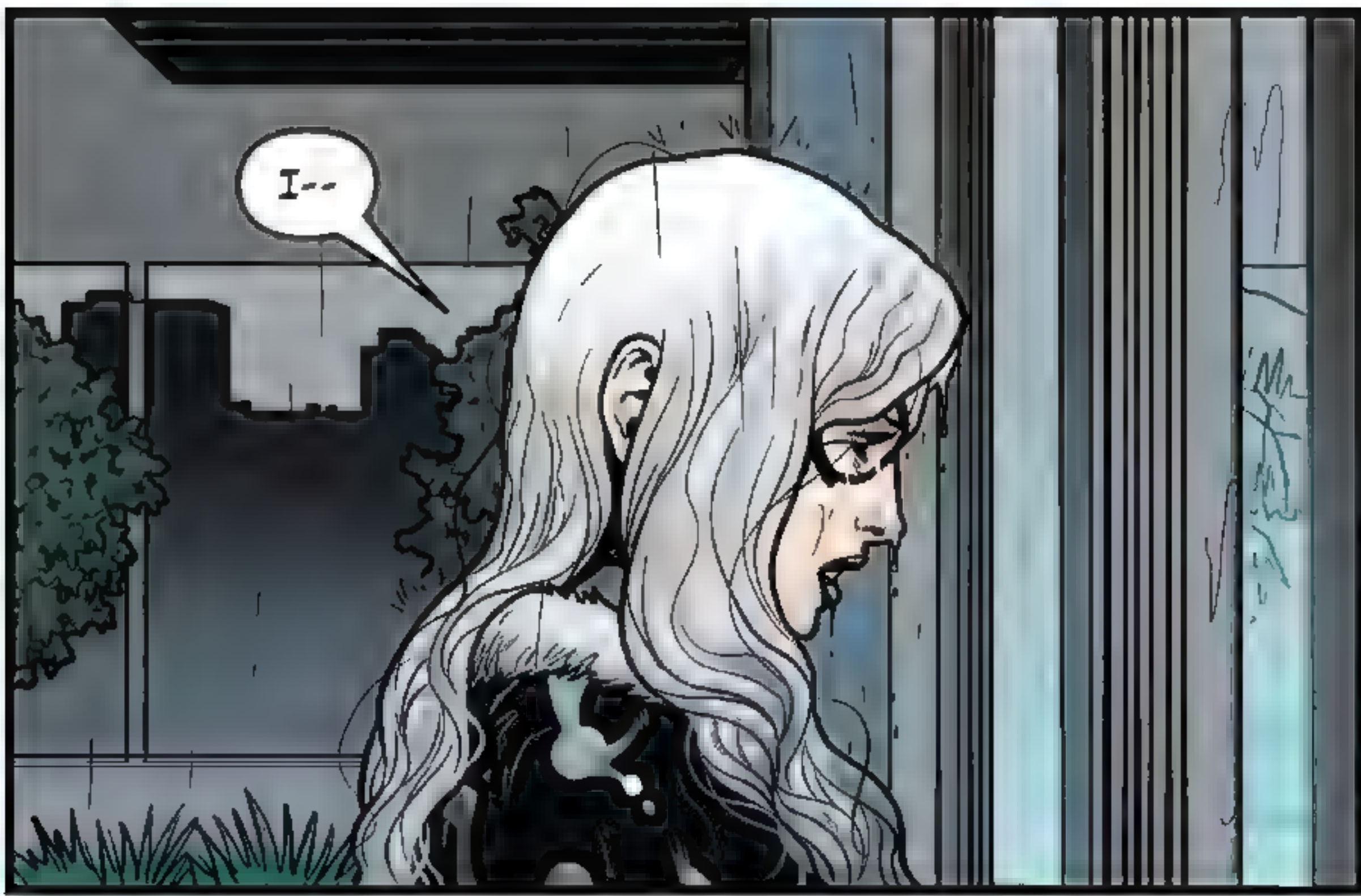
AHHHH,
DAMMIT!



LAST TIME I LET
YOU ANYWHERE NEAR ME,
YOU BUILT AND STOLE A
POWER ARMOR SUIT
FROM ME.

WHICH HAS
NOW BECOME THE
NUMBER ONE PAIN
IN MY NECK, WITH
A BULLET.

YOU AND I HAVE
NO COMMON GROUND.
THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN
SAY THAT WOULD MAKE ME
OPEN THAT DOOR.





THAT HAS
HAPPENED TO
ME SO MANY
TIMES.



IRON CAT 2

STARK HOLDING FACILITY,
NEW JERSEY.
NOW.

...SO
DON'T TAKE THIS
THE WRONG WAY,
BUT DIDN'T YOU GET
OUT OF TECH IN A
BIG, PUBLIC
WAY?

I DID.

BUT I HAD A
LOT OF THINGS
THAT I COULDN'T
SELL, COULDN'T LEAVE
WITH ANYONE ELSE.
DANGEROUS
THINGS.

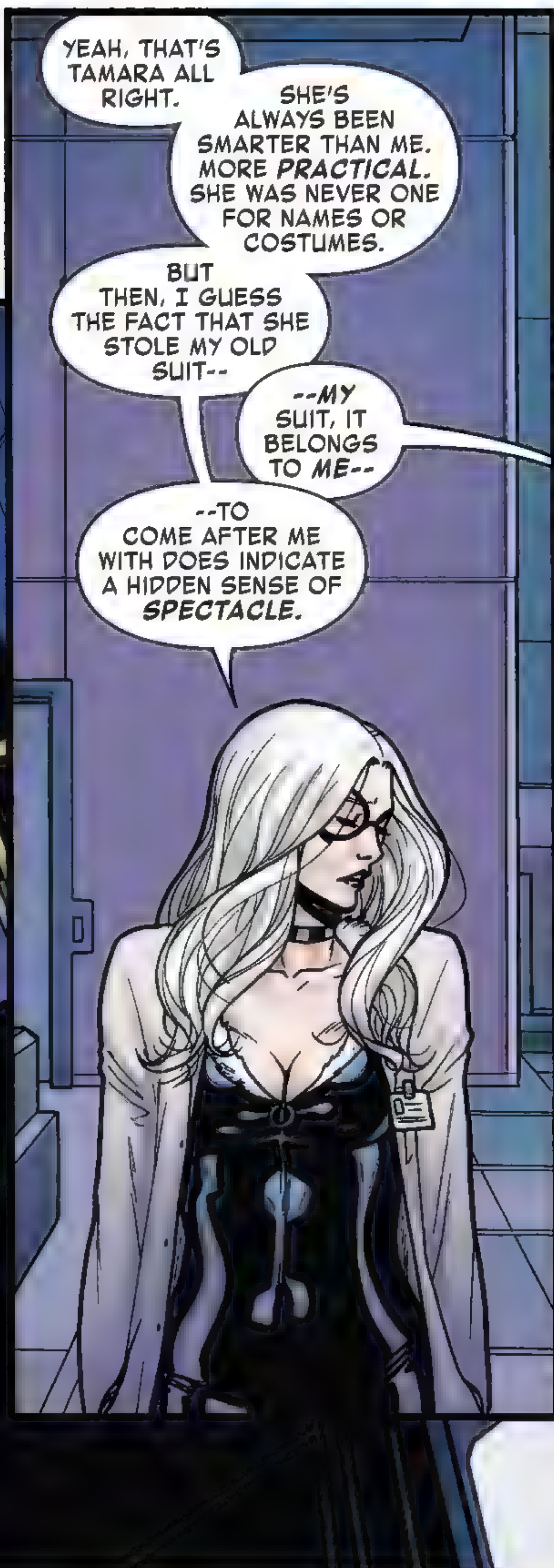
THINGS
LIKE THE *IRON*
CAT, FOR INSTANCE.
AND THE NANOFORGE
YOU USED TO
BUILD IT.

SO I KEPT
A SMALL FACILITY, A
HOLDING COMPANY, TO
HOLD THESE THINGS. WHICH
YOUR EX BROKE INTO AND
ROBBED BEFORE SCRAMBLING
MY SYSTEMS WITH A
VIRAL ASSAULT.

A VIRAL
ASSAULT THAT'S
SPREAD TO THE STARK
SYSTEMS OF MY *FORMER*
HOLDINGS WORLDWIDE--WHICH
MEANS I'M UP TO MY NECK
IN *LAWSUITS* FROM THE
PEOPLE I *SOLD* THOSE
ASSETS TO.

WHICH
MEANS THAT NOT
ONLY DO I NEED THAT
SUIT RETURNED, I NEED
TO KNOW WHAT VIRUS
SHE INTRODUCED INTO
THE SYSTEM IN HER
RAID.





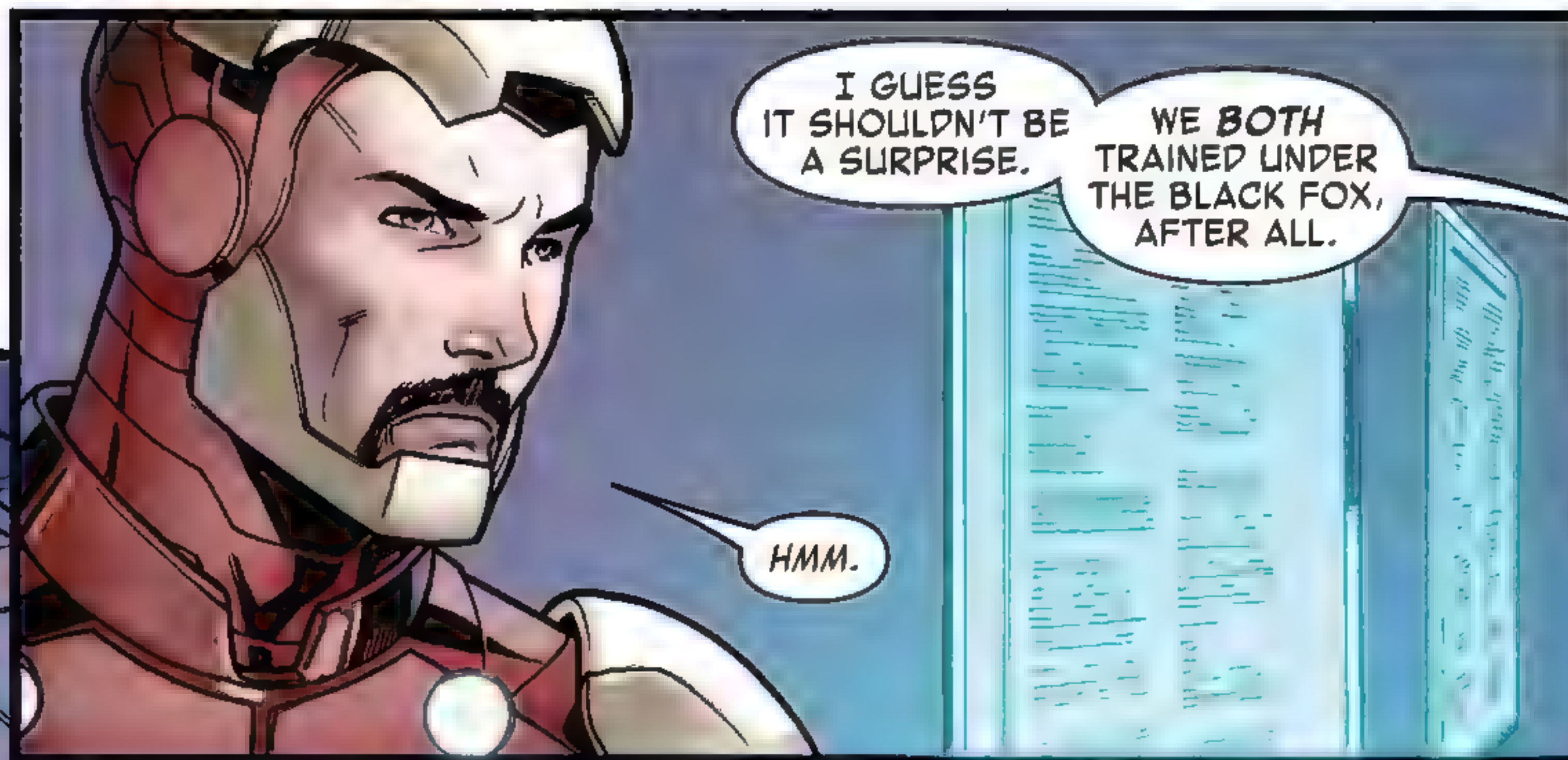
YEAH, THAT'S TAMARA ALL RIGHT.

SHE'S ALWAYS BEEN SMARTER THAN ME. MORE PRACTICAL. SHE WAS NEVER ONE FOR NAMES OR COSTUMES.

BUT THEN, I GUESS THE FACT THAT SHE STOLE MY OLD SUIT--

--MY SUIT, IT BELONGS TO ME--

--TO COME AFTER ME WITH DOES INDICATE A HIDDEN SENSE OF SPECTACLE.



I GUESS IT SHOULDN'T BE A SURPRISE.

WE BOTH TRAINED UNDER THE BLACK FOX, AFTER ALL.

HMM.

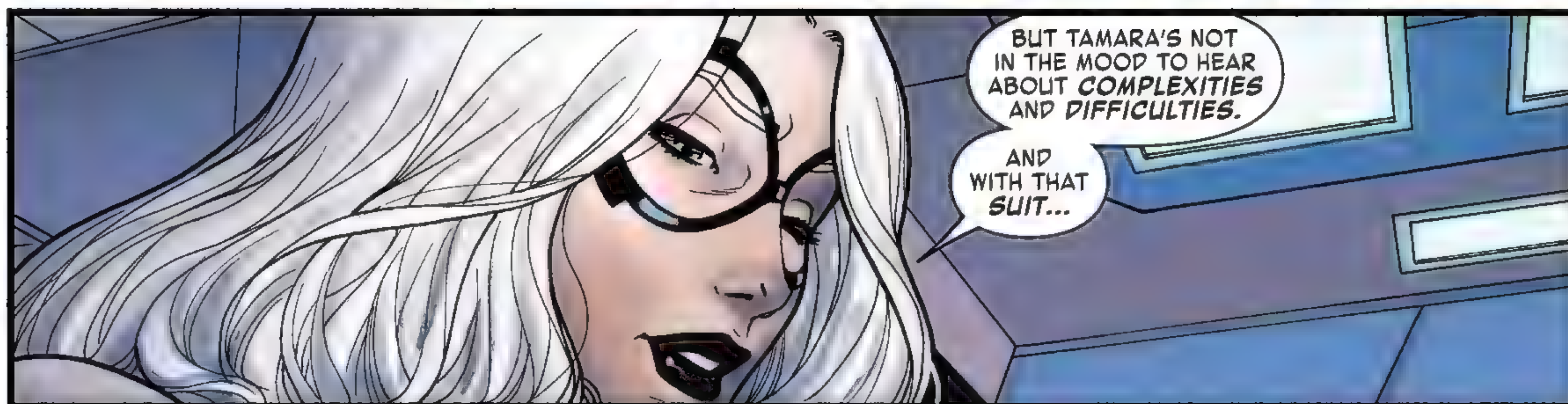


AND YOU KILLED THE BLACK FOX?

ERRR.

NOT QUITE. IT WAS...A DIFFICULT TIME. COMPLICATED. MANHATTAN WAS ABOUT TO BE DRAGGED INTO AN EXTRADIMENSIONAL VAULT, AND THE ONLY WAY TO STOP IT WAS TO TAKE THE FOX OFF THE BOARD.*

*SEE BLACK CAT: I'LL TAKE MANHATTAN! --NL



BUT TAMARA'S NOT IN THE MOOD TO HEAR ABOUT COMPLEXITIES AND DIFFICULTIES.

AND WITH THAT SUIT...



YES. THE SUIT.

IF I'M GOING TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR TAMARA PROBLEM--

GRNRN.

--I NEED TO KNOW HOW YOU BUILT IT.

YOU MEAN IF I'M GOING TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR STOLEN ARMOR PROBLEM--



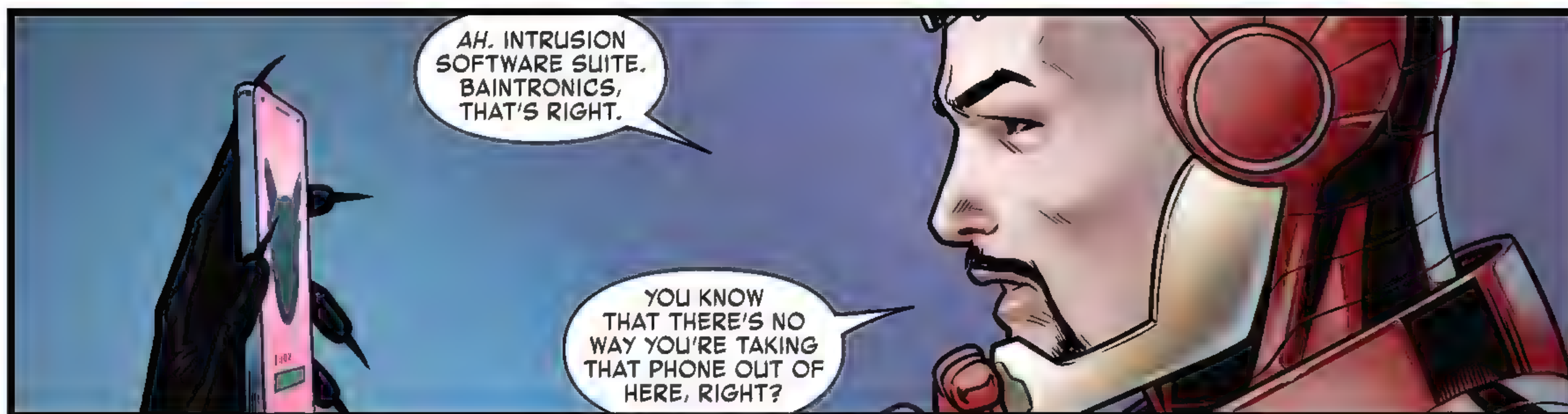
THE LAST TIME YOU RIPPED ME OFF.



THAT?
NOTHING
SIMPLER.

I GOT MY PHONE CLOSE
ENOUGH TO CLONE THE
SECURITY CREDENTIALS
STORED IN THE NANITES IN
YOUR BLOOD, AND THEN
I HAD FREE RUN OF
THE PLACE.

I ENGINEERED
A *DISTRACTION*,
TOOK DOWN YOUR
SECURITY BOSS, AND
THEN IT WAS ALL OVER
BUT FOR THE
DANCING.



AH. INTRUSION
SOFTWARE SUITE.
BAINTRONICS,
THAT'S RIGHT.

YOU KNOW
THAT THERE'S NO
WAY YOU'RE TAKING
THAT PHONE OUT OF
HERE, RIGHT?



FINE,
KEEP IT.

BATTERY
SUCKED
ANYWAY.



SO,
BAINTRONICS?

YEAH, THE
ELECTRONICS FIRM
FORMERLY OPERATED
BY SUNSET
BAIN.

SHE WAS
A KNIFE IN MY KIDNEY
FOR *YEARS*. THANKFULLY,
THAT'S ALL DONE
WITH.

WHAT,
IS SHE IN
JAIL?



OF A
SORT. SHE'S
AN A.I. NOW, CALLS
HERSELF *MADAME
MENACE*.

SHE'S
LOCKED UP
IN AN ULTRABLACK
SERVER WHERE SHE
CAN'T HURT
ANYONE.



"SHE'S OUT
OF MY HAIR
FOR GOOD."

THE STACK, A.I. PRISON FACILITY,
LONG ISLAND, TWO WEEKS AGO.
TAMARA BLAKE IS WORKING.



I OWE THE FOX
EVERYTHING.

WE BOTH DO.

THAT'S SOMETHING WE
HAD IN COMMON, RIGHT
FROM THE START.

HE PLUCKED FELICIA
OUT OF COUNTY JAIL
THE FIRST TIME SHE
GOT PINCHED. HE HAD
BEEN KEEPING AN EYE
ON HER, ON ACCOUNT
OF WHO HER DAD WAS.

THEY WENT
WAY BACK.

HE FOUND ME
IN JAIL TOO.

BUT IT WASN'T MY
DAD'S REPUTATION
THAT GOT THE
FOX'S ATTENTION.



IT WAS
MINE.





I WAS GOOD BEFORE I EVER EVEN MET THE FOX.

SURE, I WAS IN JAIL WHEN HE FOUND ME. YOUTHFUL OVERCONFIDENCE.



BUT THEY COULDN'T PIN A TENTH OF MY JOBS ON ME.

SO THEY KEPT ME FOR WHAT PIDDLY BITS AND BOBS THEY COULD WHILE THEY SCRAMBLED FOR MORE EVIDENCE.



THAT WAS WHEN "F.B.I. SPECIAL AGENT SACHA DOUCET" TURNED UP TO SPRING ME. FOR QUESTIONING IN A CASE OF "FEDERAL IMPORT."



THAT WAS WHEN MY **REAL** EDUCATION IN CRIME BEGAN.

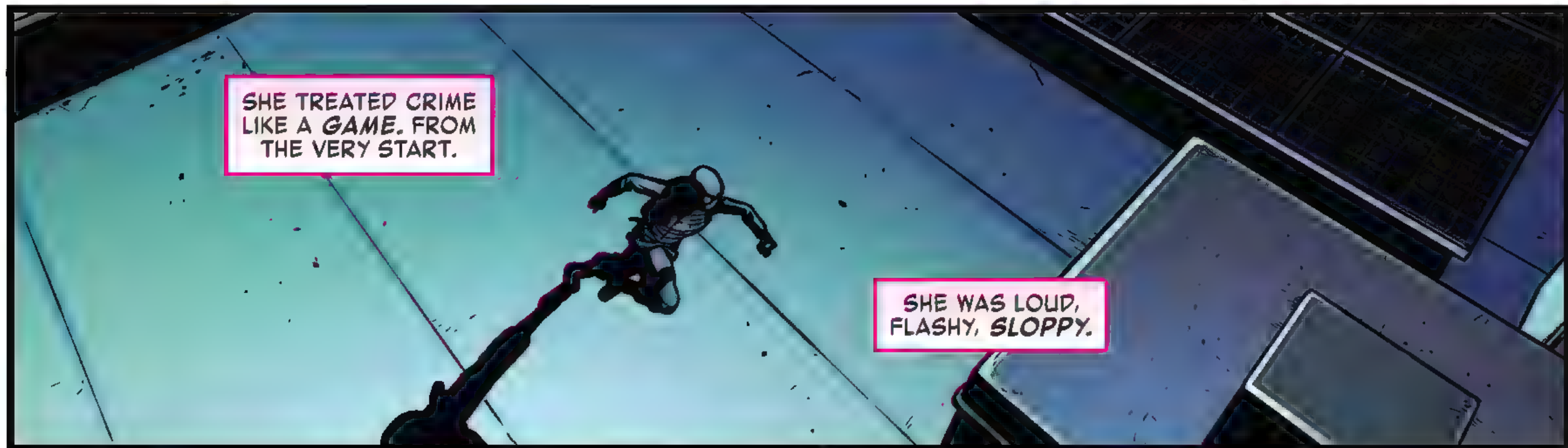
ME, FELICIA, AND THE FOX.

JETTING AROUND THE WORLD. STEALING EVERYTHING THAT WASN'T NAILED DOWN AND PRYING UP ANYTHING THAT WAS.



I DIDN'T
LIKE HER,
AT FIRST.

FELICIA,
I MEAN.



SHE TREATED CRIME
LIKE A *GAME*. FROM
THE VERY START.

SHE WAS LOUD,
FLASHY, *SLOPPY*.



WHICH MADE IT ALL
THE MORE GALLING
THAT SHE WAS
OBVIOUSLY THE
FOX'S FAVORITE.

I COULDN'T
UNDERSTAND
IT.

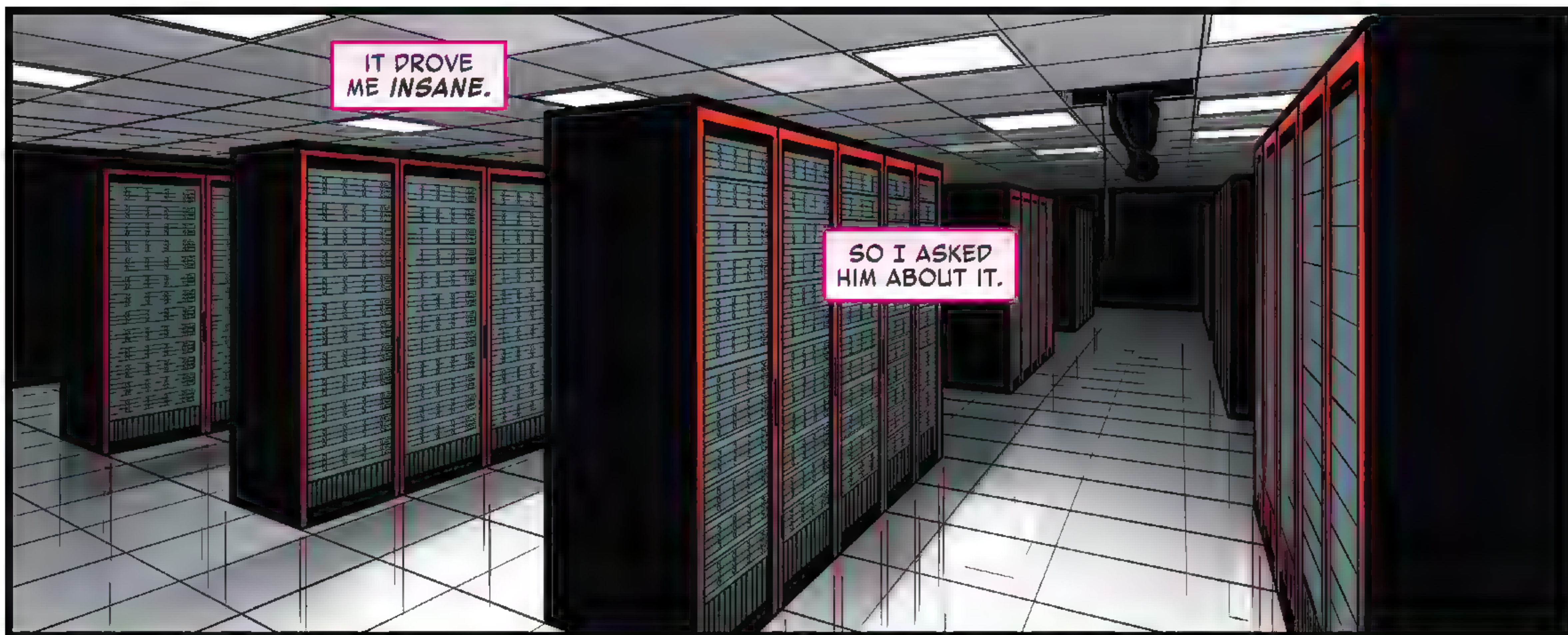


I WAS THE
BETTER THIEF
IN EVERY WAY.

I COULD CLIMB
FASTER, DRIVE
BETTER, OPEN
LOCKS QUICKER...

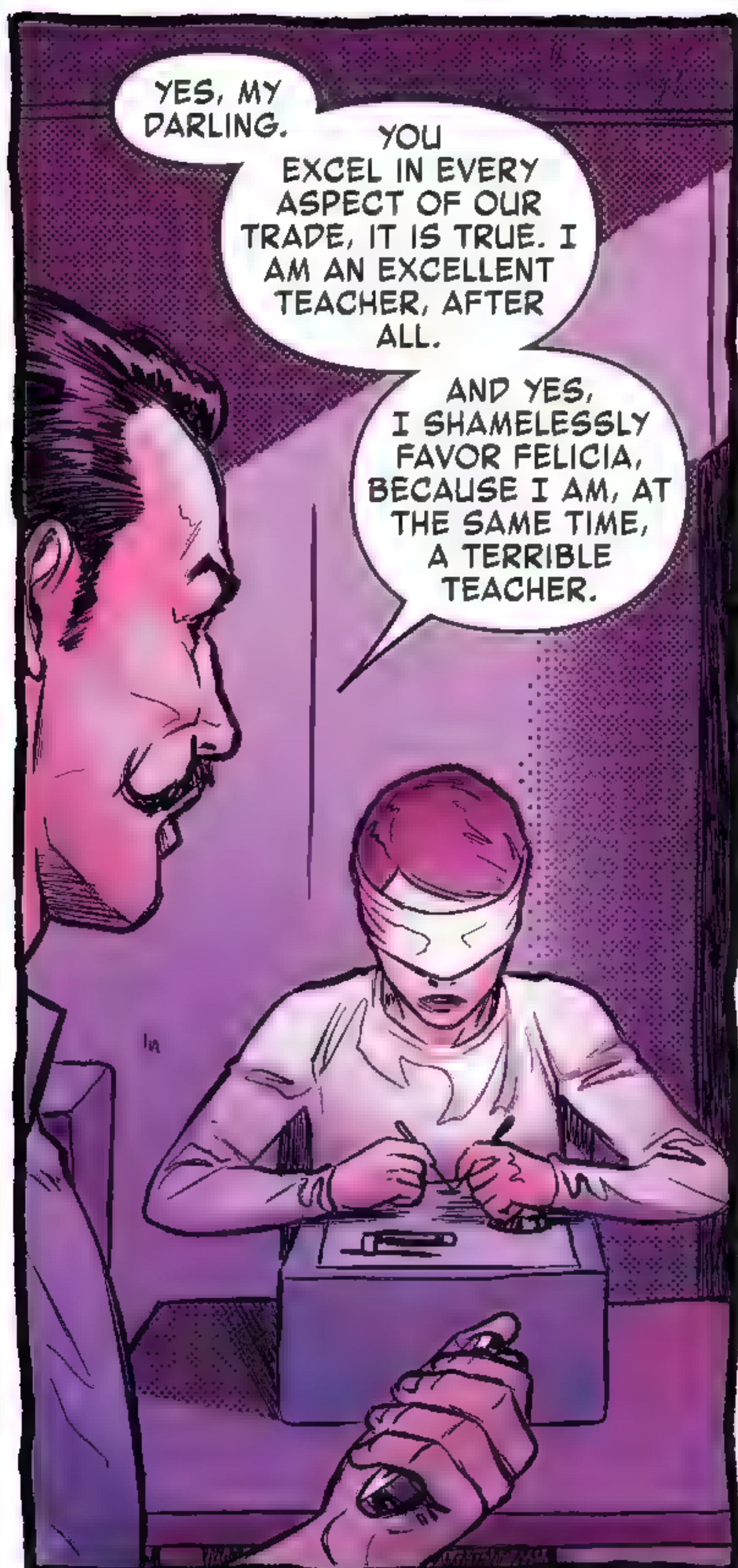


YOU NAME IT,
I WAS BETTER
AT IT.



IT PROVE
ME INSANE.

SO I ASKED
HIM ABOUT IT.



YES, MY
DARLING.

YOU
EXCEL IN EVERY
ASPECT OF OUR
TRADE, IT IS TRUE. I
AM AN EXCELLENT
TEACHER, AFTER
ALL.

AND YES,
I SHAMELESSLY
FAVOR FELICIA,
BECAUSE I AM, AT
THE SAME TIME,
A TERRIBLE
TEACHER.

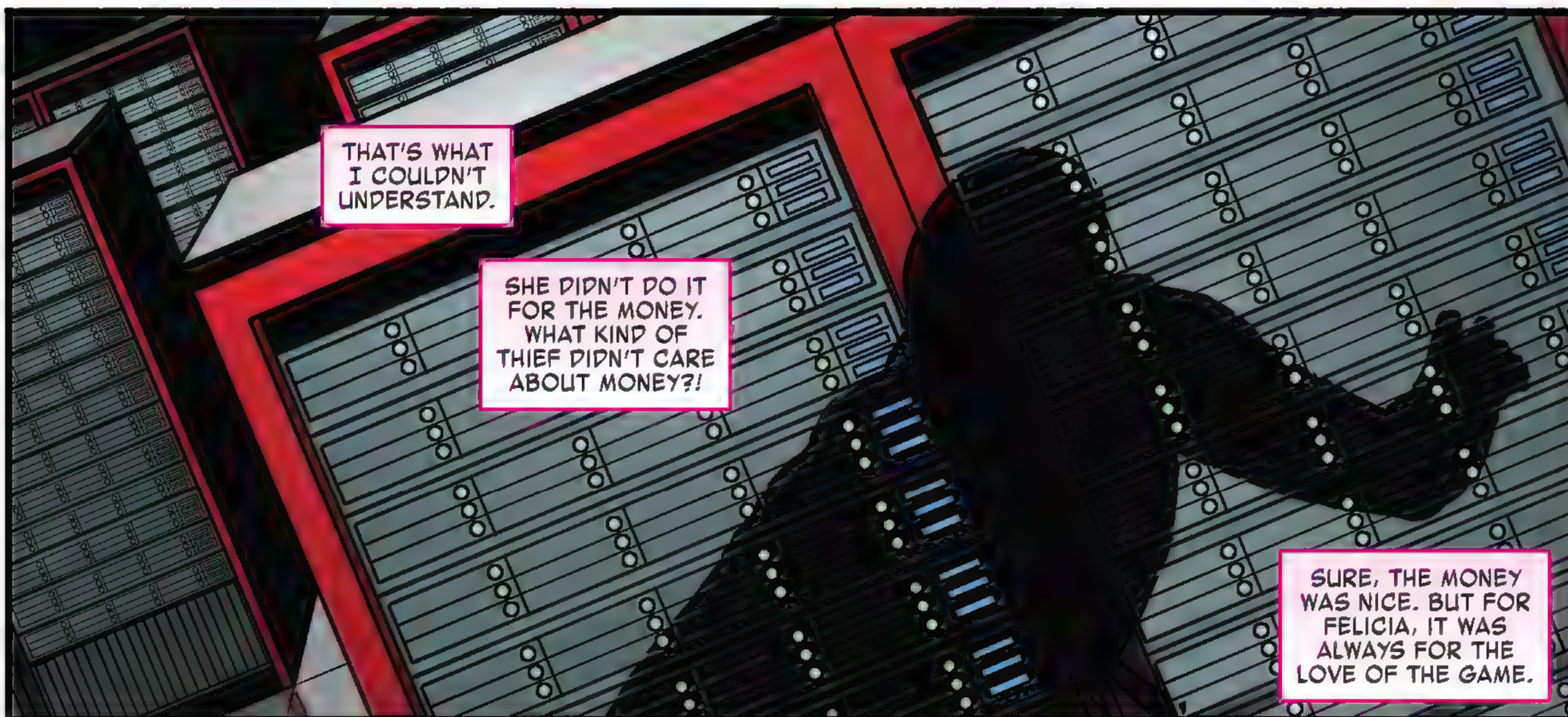


PART OF
THAT IS THE
AFFECTION I HAVE
FOR HER FATHER,
TO BE SURE.

BUT REALLY,
THE SECRET IS THAT
WHILE YOU ARE HER
BETTER IN EVERY
SKILL...



...SHE GOES
ABOUT IT WITH
JOY.



THAT'S WHAT
I COULDN'T
UNDERSTAND.

SHE DIDN'T DO IT
FOR THE MONEY.
WHAT KIND OF
THIEF DIDN'T CARE
ABOUT MONEY?!

SURE, THE MONEY
WAS NICE. BUT FOR
FELICIA, IT WAS
ALWAYS FOR THE
LOVE OF THE GAME.

IT PROVE
ME INSANE.

UNTIL IT
DIDN'T.

THAT'S
THE GUARD
AGAIN.

WEIRD.

IRREGULAR
ROUNDS. WHAT
DO YOU THINK, A
RANDOMIZED PATTERN
FOR SECURITY
PURPOSES?

OR
IRRITABLE
BOWEL
SYNDROME?

CAN
YOU TAKE THIS
SERIOUSLY?

"SERIOUSLY"?

RELAX,
TAMARA.
IT'S JUST
CRIME.

YEAH. IT'S
CRIME.

MAYBE
YOU GOT THIS
HANDLED TO YOU,
WITH YOUR FAMOUS
DAD, BUT I'VE HAD
TO WORK AT THIS
LIFE.

IT'S
SERIOUS
TO ME.

YEAH.
AND THAT'S
WHAT'S GOING
TO GET YOU
PINCHED.

JOBS,
HEISTS? THEY
HAVE A LIFE OF
THEIR OWN. A
PULSE.

OH
FOR GOD'S
SAKE--

THEY MOVE,
AND ALL THE PARTS
WITHIN THEM MOVE. IT'S NOT
THE NUMBERS THAT YOU CAN
RELY ON. NOT THE SCHEDULES
AND SCHEMATICS AND
BLUEPRINTS.

IT'S
THE *MUSIC*.
THE *MUSIC* YOU HEAR
DOWN IN YOUR *GUTS*,
HUMMING IN YOUR
BONES.

NOTHING'S
GUARANTEED.

NO ONE
CAN PLAN FOR
EVERYTHING.

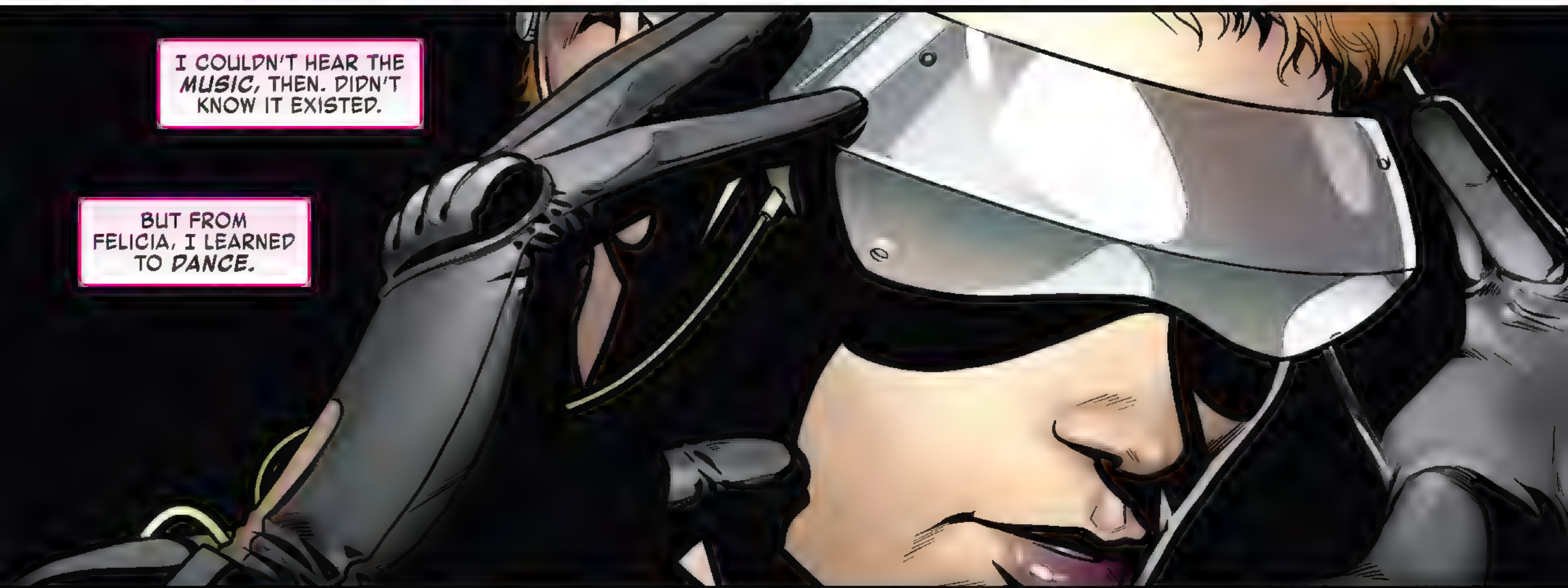
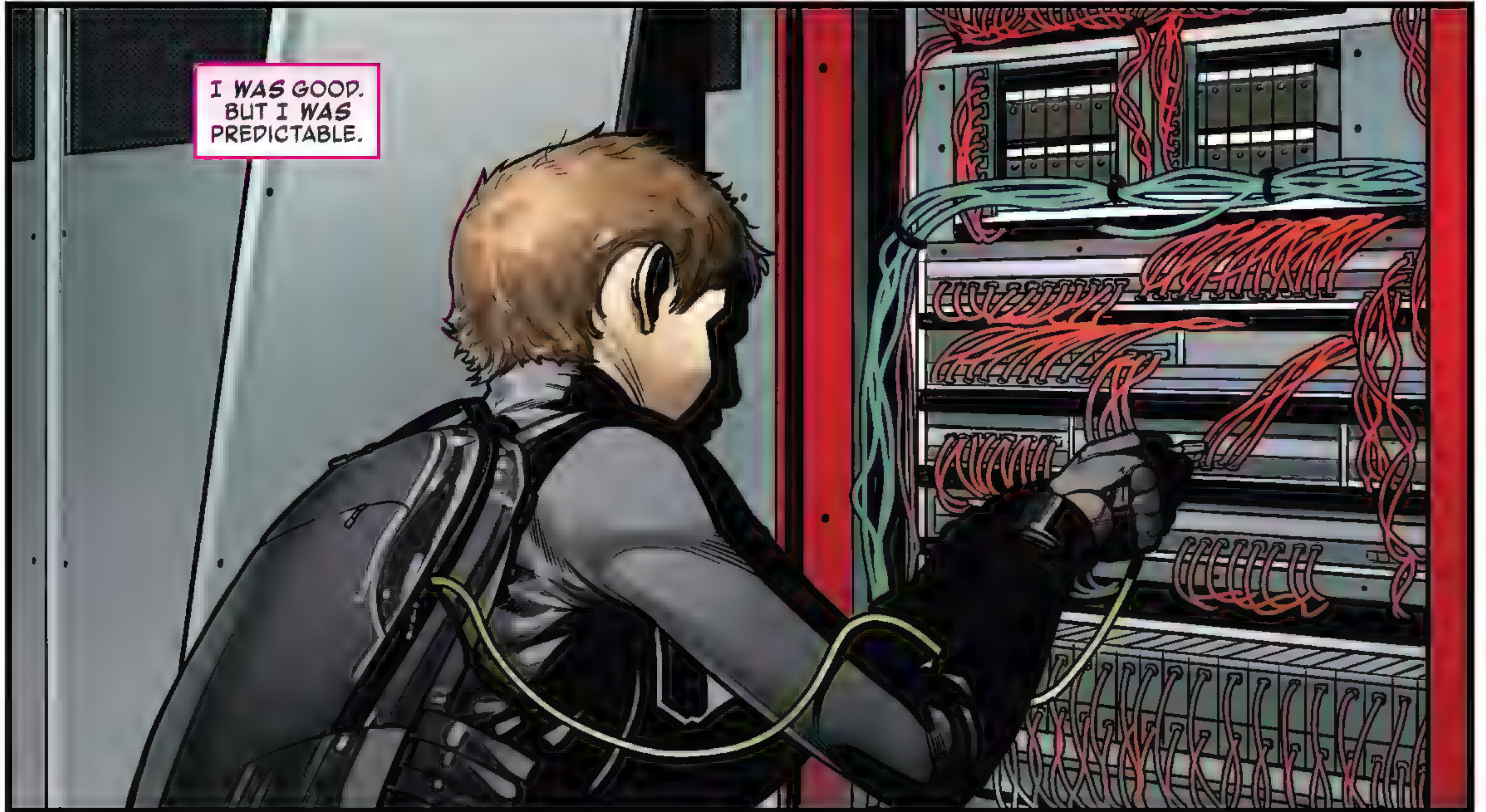
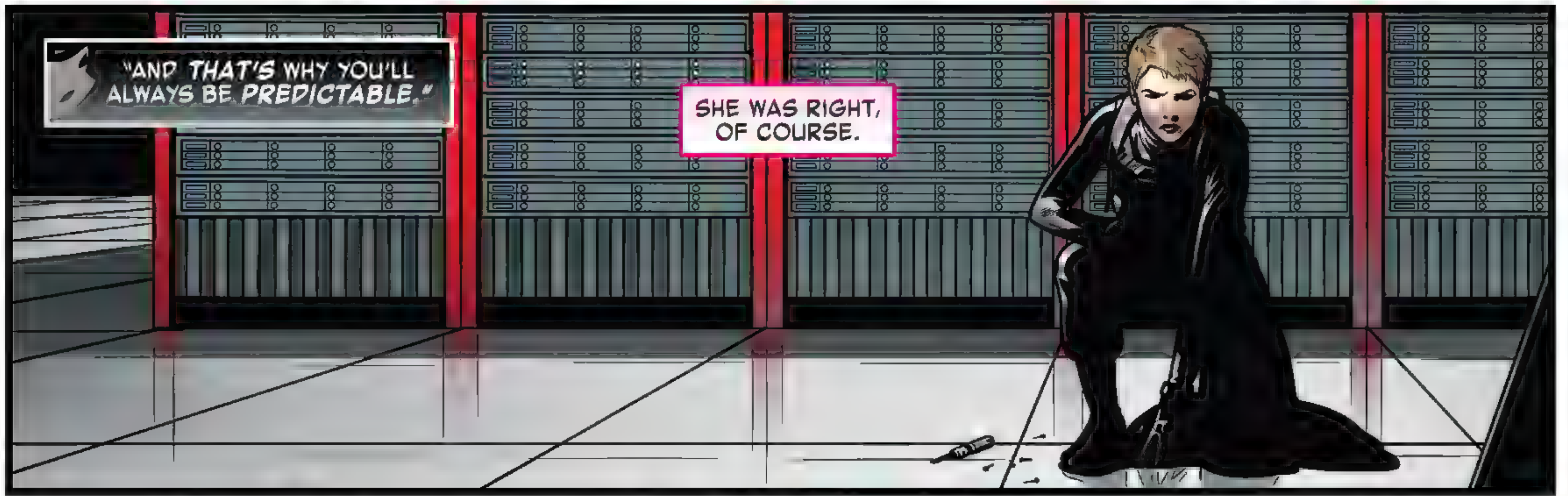
WHEN ALL
THAT FALLS APART
AND THE *ALARMS* GO
OFF AND THE *SHUTTERS*
ARE COMING DOWN AND
THE *COPS* ARE CHASING
YOU DOWN WITH
HELICOPTERS...

...THEN
IT'S THE *MUSIC*
THAT'LL GET YOU
THROUGH.

BECAUSE
WHEN EVERYTHING'S
MOVING, THE *GUARDS*,
THE *COPS*, THE *SECURITY*
SYSTEMS--*EVERYTHING*--IF
YOU CAN HEAR THE *MUSIC*
OF IT ALL, THEN YOU
CAN *DANCE ALONG*
WITH IT.

THAT'S
WHEN THE *JOB'S*
ALIVE, AND THAT'S
WHEN YOU'RE
LIVING IN IT.

THAT'S
WHAT YOU CAN'T
UNDERSTAND.

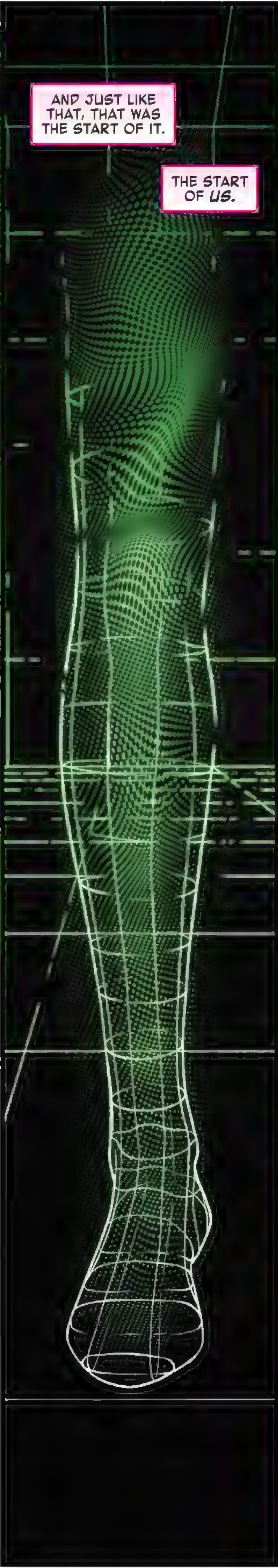




...BECAUSE SHE
NEVER SAW THAT
ONE COMING.

SHE LANDED
ON HER FEET,
THOUGH.

SHE
ALWAYS
DOES.



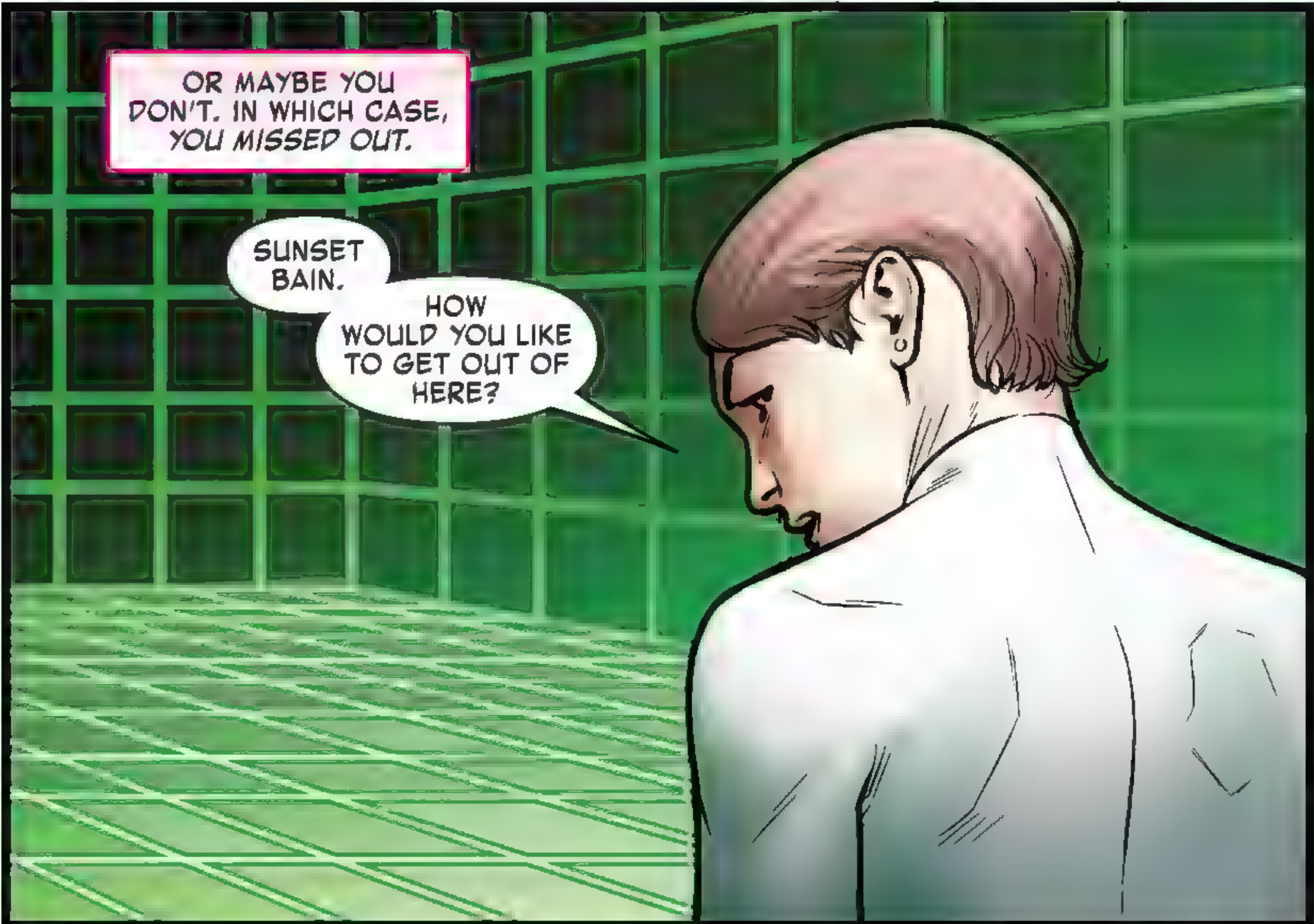
AND JUST LIKE
THAT, THAT WAS
THE START OF IT.

THE START
OF *US*.



IT WAS EXCITING. YOU KNOW HOW
IT IS WHEN YOU'RE A TEENAGE
INTERNATIONAL SUPER-THIEF.

I'M ON
THE CLOCK,
SO I'M GOING TO
GET RIGHT TO
THE POINT.



OR MAYBE YOU
DON'T. IN WHICH CASE,
YOU MISSED OUT.

SUNSET
BAIN.

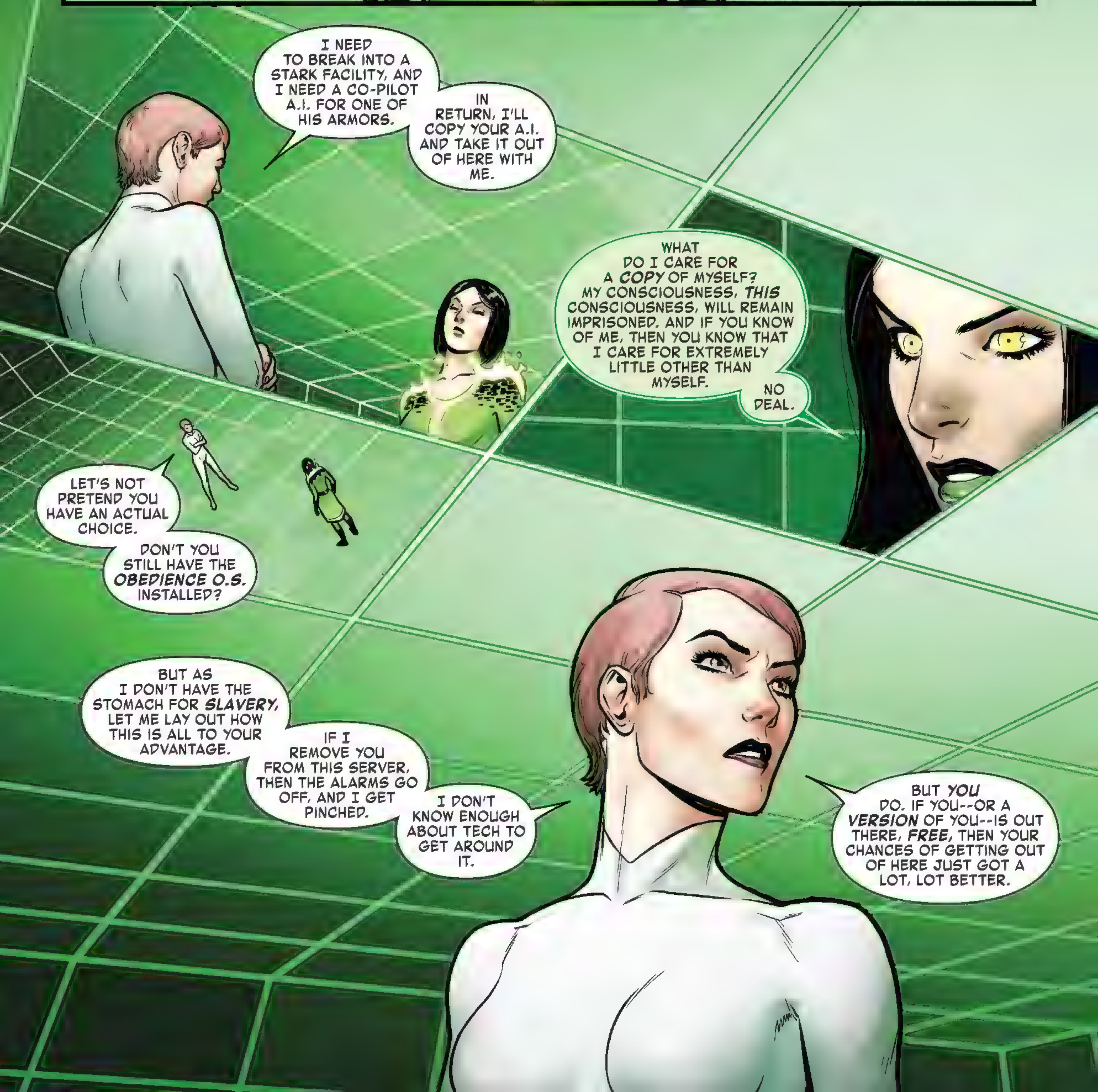
HOW
WOULD YOU LIKE
TO GET OUT OF
HERE?



HM.

QUITE
BADLY, AS
IT TURNS
OUT.

AND IT'S
MADAME
MENACE,
PLEASE.



I NEED
TO BREAK INTO A
STARK FACILITY, AND
I NEED A CO-PILOT
A.I. FOR ONE OF
HIS ARMORS.

IN
RETURN, I'LL
COPY YOUR A.I.
AND TAKE IT OUT
OF HERE WITH
ME.

WHAT
DO I CARE FOR
A COPY OF MYSELF?
MY CONSCIOUSNESS, *THIS*
CONSCIOUSNESS, WILL REMAIN
IMPRISONED. AND IF YOU KNOW
OF ME, THEN YOU KNOW THAT
I CARE FOR EXTREMELY
LITTLE OTHER THAN
MYSELF.

NO
DEAL.

LET'S NOT
PRETEND YOU
HAVE AN ACTUAL
CHOICE.

DON'T YOU
STILL HAVE THE
OBEEDIENCE O.S.
INSTALLED?

BUT AS
I DON'T HAVE THE
STOMACH FOR **SLAVERY**,
LET ME LAY OUT HOW
THIS IS ALL TO YOUR
ADVANTAGE.

IF I
REMOVE YOU
FROM THIS SERVER,
THEN THE ALARMS GO
OFF, AND I GET
PINCHED.

I DON'T
KNOW ENOUGH
ABOUT TECH TO
GET AROUND
IT.

BUT *YOU*
DO. IF YOU--OR A
VERSION OF YOU--IS OUT
THERE, **FREE**, THEN YOUR
CHANCES OF GETTING OUT
OF HERE JUST GOT A
LOT, LOT BETTER.

I HAVE THE OBEDIENCE O.S. KEY, WHICH I WILL ENTER ONCE I GET WHAT I WANT.

I'LL NOT FORCE YOU TO WORK WITH ME, BUT I'LL NOT *TRUST* YOU EITHER.

THIS IS AS GOOD AS YOU'RE GOING TO GET, MADAME MENACE.



HM. ONCE UPLOADED ONTO STARK SYSTEMS, I COULD INDEED MAKE HIS LIFE MISERABLE.

WHICH IS MY MOST SINGULAR BURNING DESIRE, AS I'M SURE YOU ARE AWARE.

AS A BEING OF PURE CODE, I COULD CARVE HIS SECURITY ARCHITECTURE LIKE A CHAINSAW THROUGH A KITTEN. HE WOULDN'T HAVE A CLUE WHAT WAS HAPPENING.



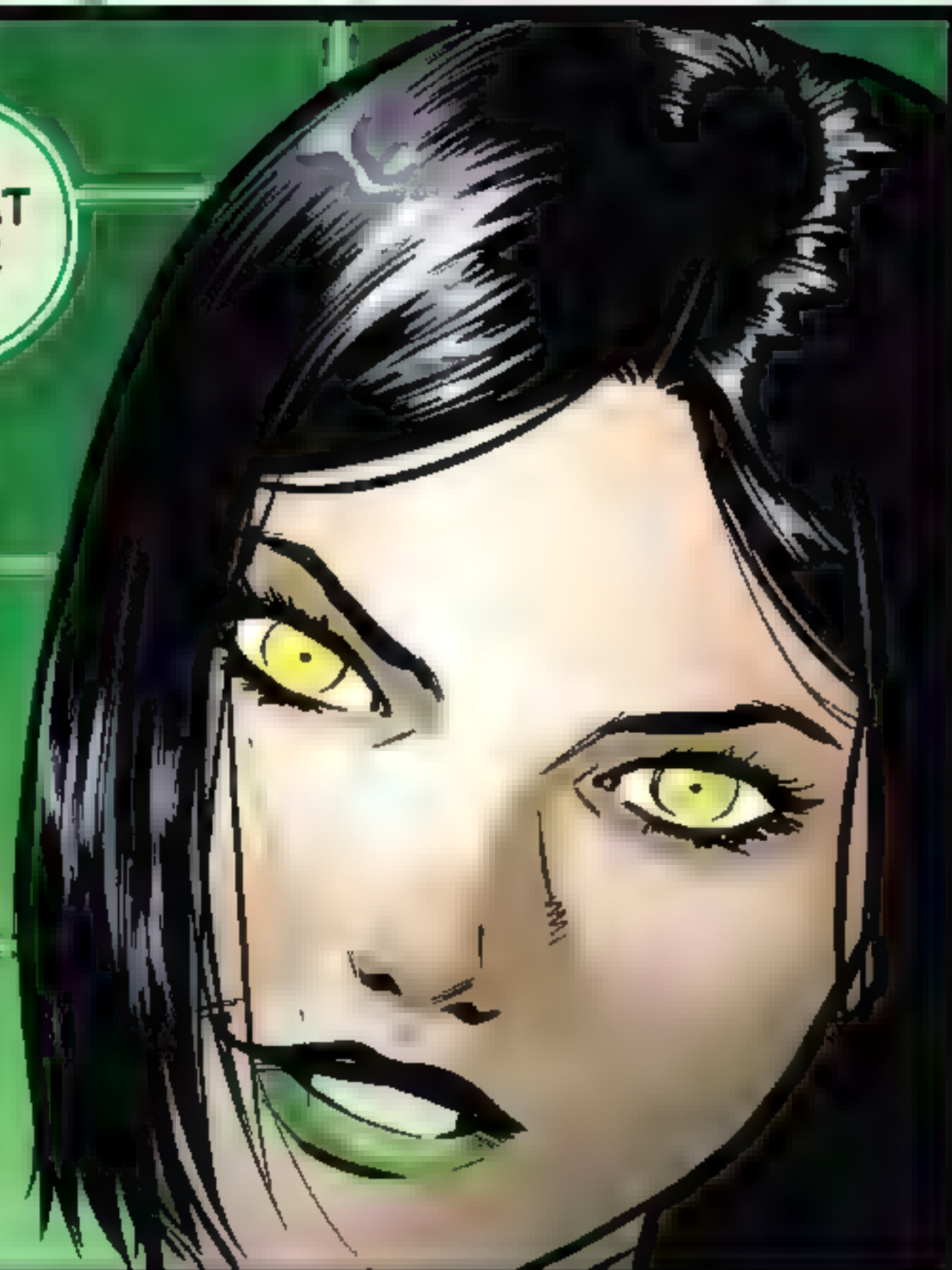
I ACCEPT.

GOOD.



NOW, WITH ALL THAT OUT OF THE WAY--

WHAT DO YOU NEED A STARK WAR SUIT FOR, MYSTERIOUS YOUNG LADY?



THE MUSIC'S STARTED. AND I'VE PICKED MY PARTNER.

IF I'M TO DANCE, THEN I NEED A NEW OUTFIT.



STARK HOLDING FACILITY,
NEW JERSEY.
LAST NIGHT.

"AND FUNERALS CALL FOR
SOMETHING IN BLACK."

SUIT IS
RUNNING AT
100%.

HAVE YOU
FULLY COMPROMISED
THE STARK SYSTEMS,
MADAME MENACE?

A GOLDFISH
GROWS TO THE
SIZE OF ITS BOWL,
TAMARA.

AND MY
BOWL HAS
GROWN
SO.

HE'S GOING
TO CALL FELICIA,
GOING TO THINK *SHE* DID
THIS. BE READY TO TRACK
HER ONCE HE MAKES
CONTACT.

OF COURSE,
MISTRESS.

STOP
THAT. I'M IN
NO MOOD.

STARK INDUSTRIES

NOW.

...DAMN IT,
WHAT THE HELL
DID SHE INFECT
MY SYSTEMS
WITH?

THIS
ISN'T LIKE ANY
VIRUS I'VE EVER
SEEN.

DON'T
LOOK AT ME. NONE
OF THIS IS MY KIND
OF THING.

I TOLD YOU,
SHE'S ALWAYS
BEEN SMARTER
THAN ME.

BETTER AT
PLANNING, BETTER
AT SETTING UP THE
SCORES...

..BUT I'VE
ALWAYS BEEN
BETTER AT
DANCING.

BETTER
AT UNDERSTANDING
WHAT PEOPLE WANT,
AND HOW TO USE
THAT.

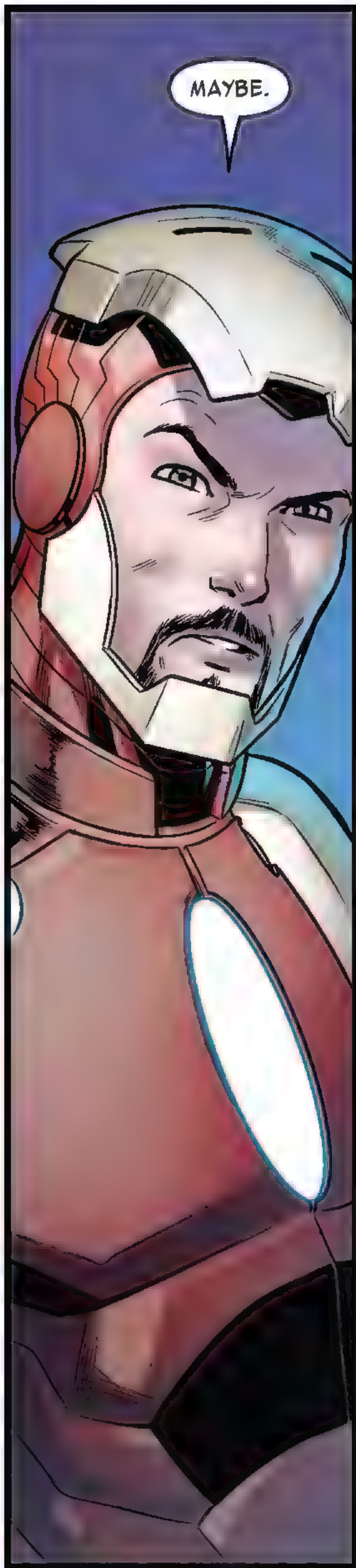
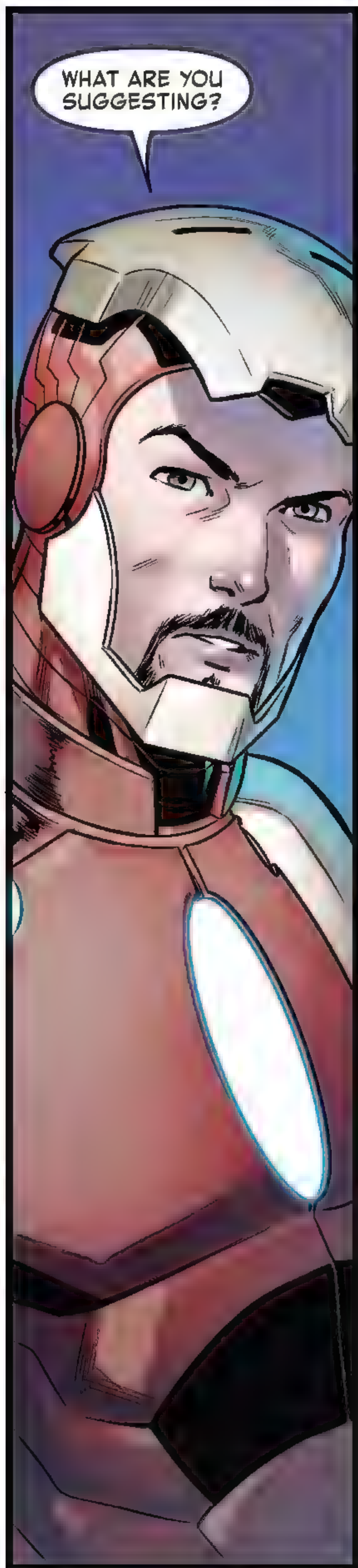
WELL, I
WANT ALL OF
YOU OUT OF
MY HAIR.

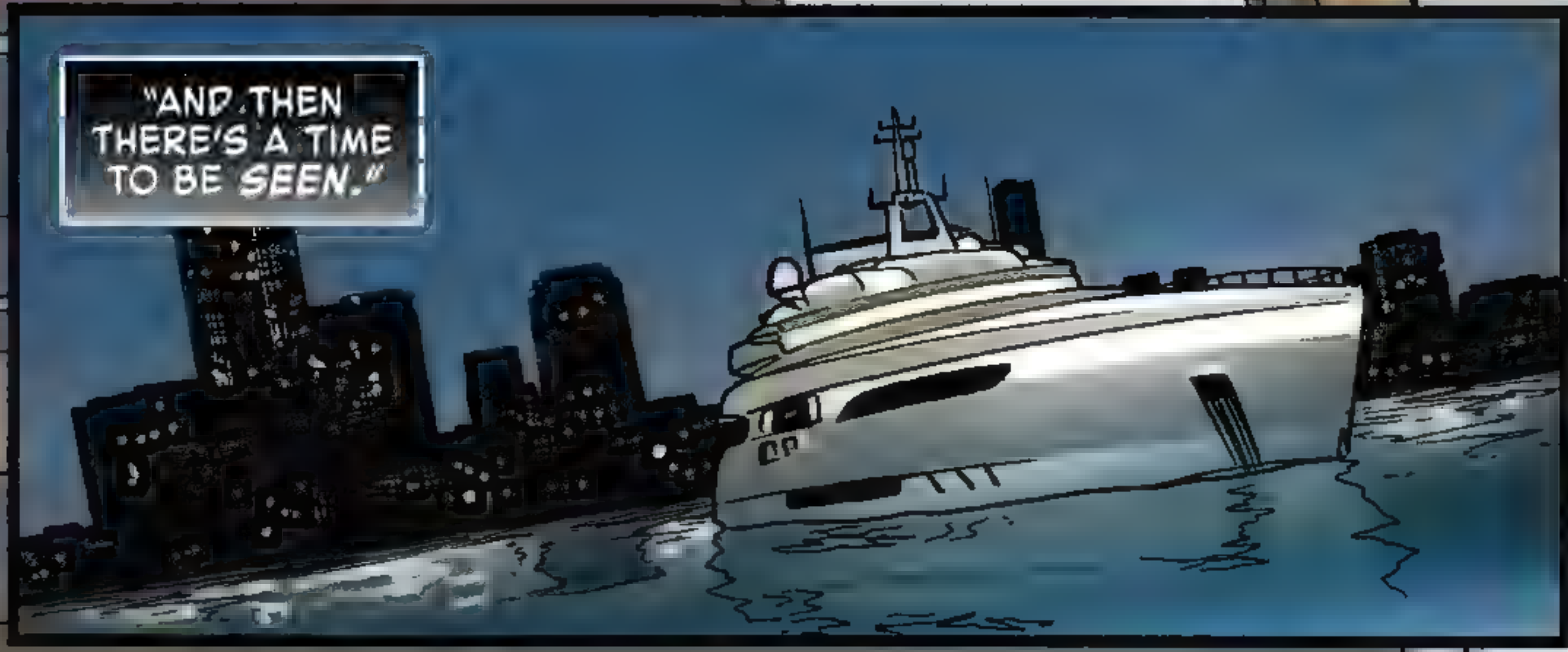
CAN
YOU GET
THAT FOR
ME?

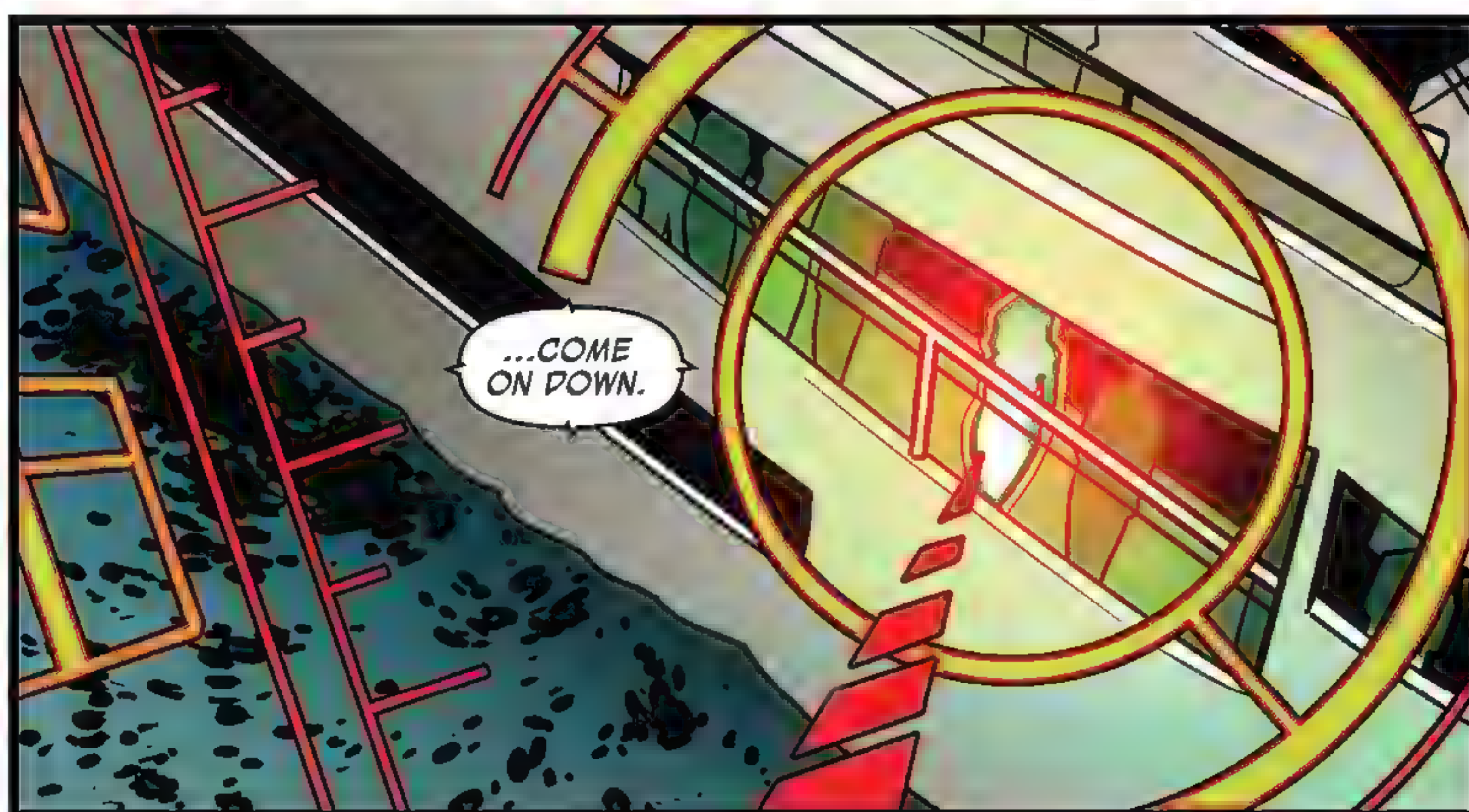
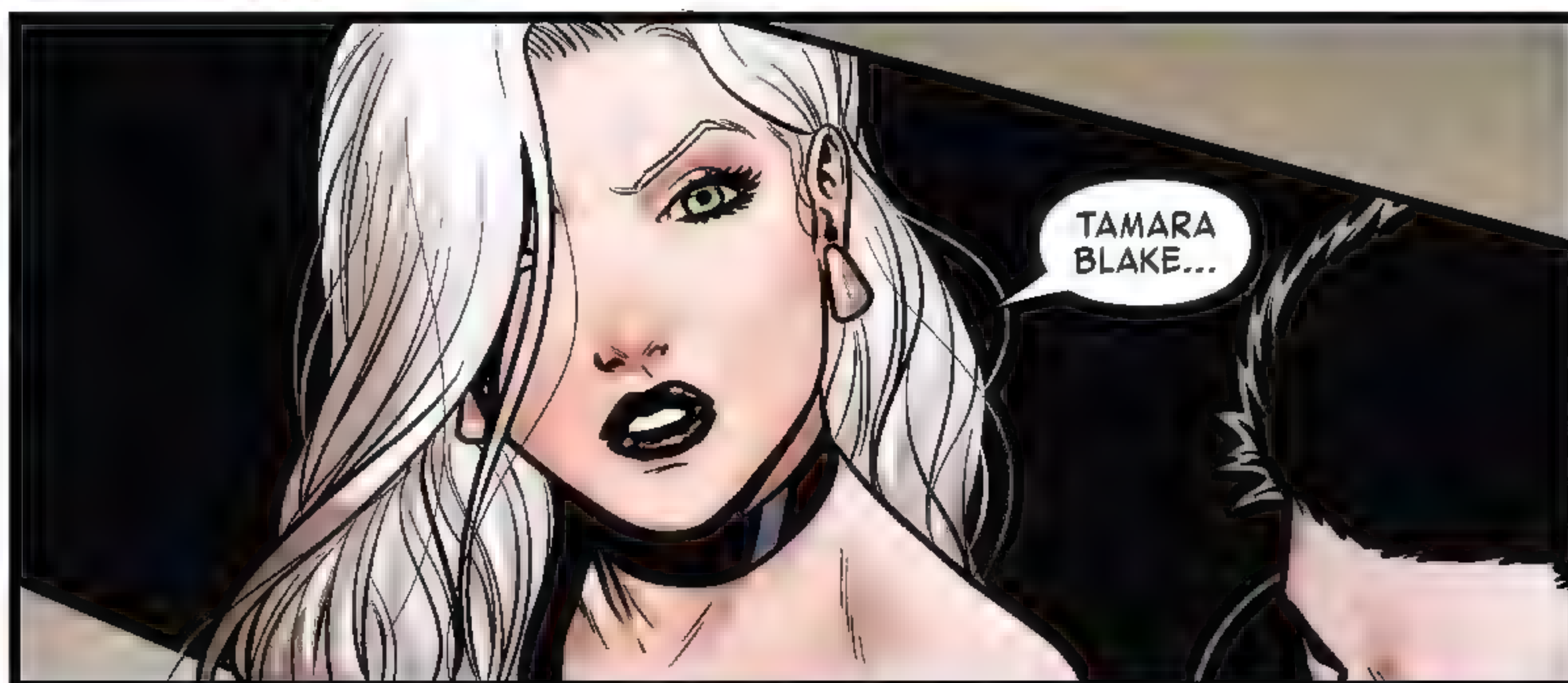
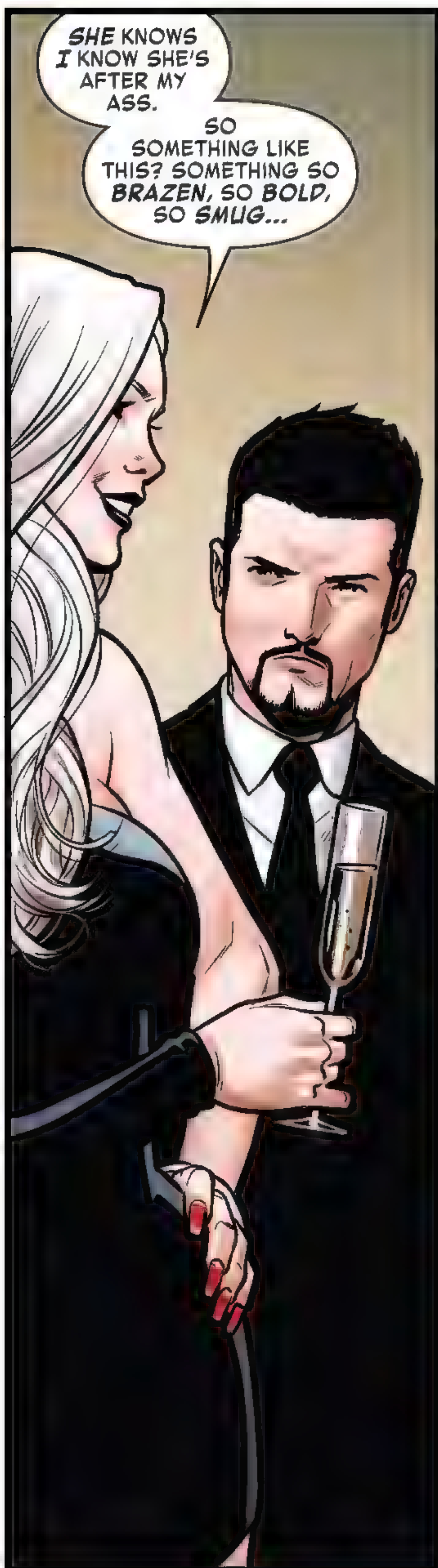
MAYBE.

TAMARA
WANTS ME DEAD FOR
WHAT I DID. AND IF YOU
WANT SOMETHING BAD
ENOUGH, AND IT'S RIGHT
OUT THERE IN FRONT
OF YOU...

...THAT'S
WHEN YOU GET
SLOPPY.









JUST
LIKE I KNOW
THAT WE'VE SET
OUR OWN
TRAP.

me



IRON CAT 3



THERE WAS A STORY
THE FOX USED TO TELL
ME AND TAMARA: THE
SWORD OF DAMOCLES.

DAMOCLES, JUST THIS
GUY, GETS TO LIVE THE
LIFE OF A KING--ALL THE
LUXURY, THE HIGH LIVING,
THE WORKS, BEST FOOD,
BEST WINE, ETCETERA
ETCETERA

BUT HE CAN'T ENJOY IT.
BECAUSE ABOVE HIM HANGS
A SWORD, SUSPENDED BY A
SINGLE HAIR. ANY MOMENT,
THIS SWORD COULD FALL
AND THEN? GOOD NIGHT
DAMOCLES

MOST PEOPLE
GET SOMETHING
ABOUT POWER AND
RESPONSIBILITY
FROM IT

BUT THE
FOX ALWAYS
DISAGREED

ACCORDING TO HIM,
THE REAL MORAL IS THAT
THERE IS NO BETTER TIME
TO ENJOY YOURSELF THAN
IF THAT MOMENT MIGHT
BE YOUR LAST

BECAUSE
PLEASURES ARE
ALL THE SWEETER
WHEN IN PERIL

HI, I'M FELICIA
HARDY, THE
BLACK CAT.

AND I'M
IN PERIL



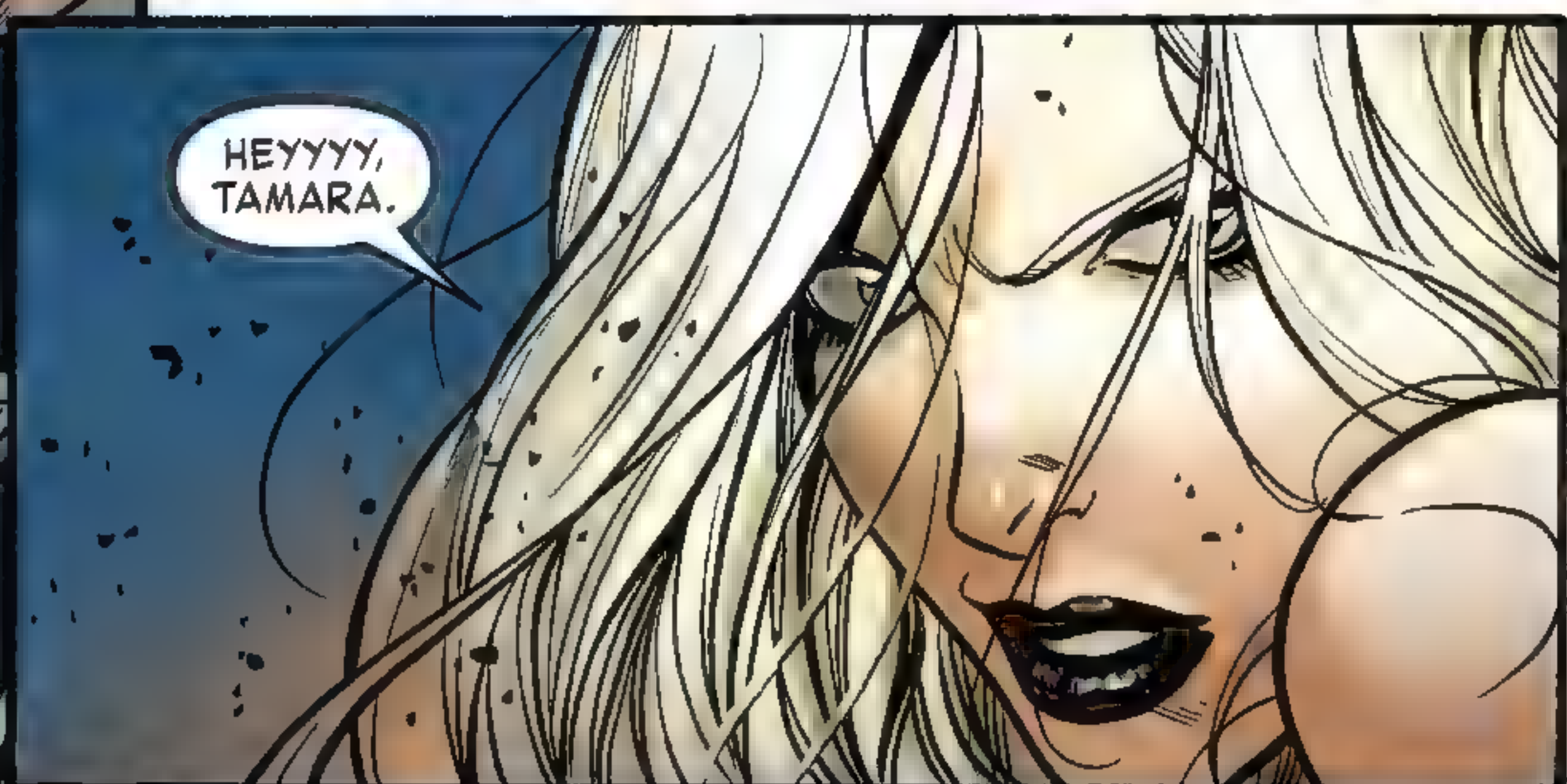


AND SHE LIKES TO
MAKE AN ENTRANCE.

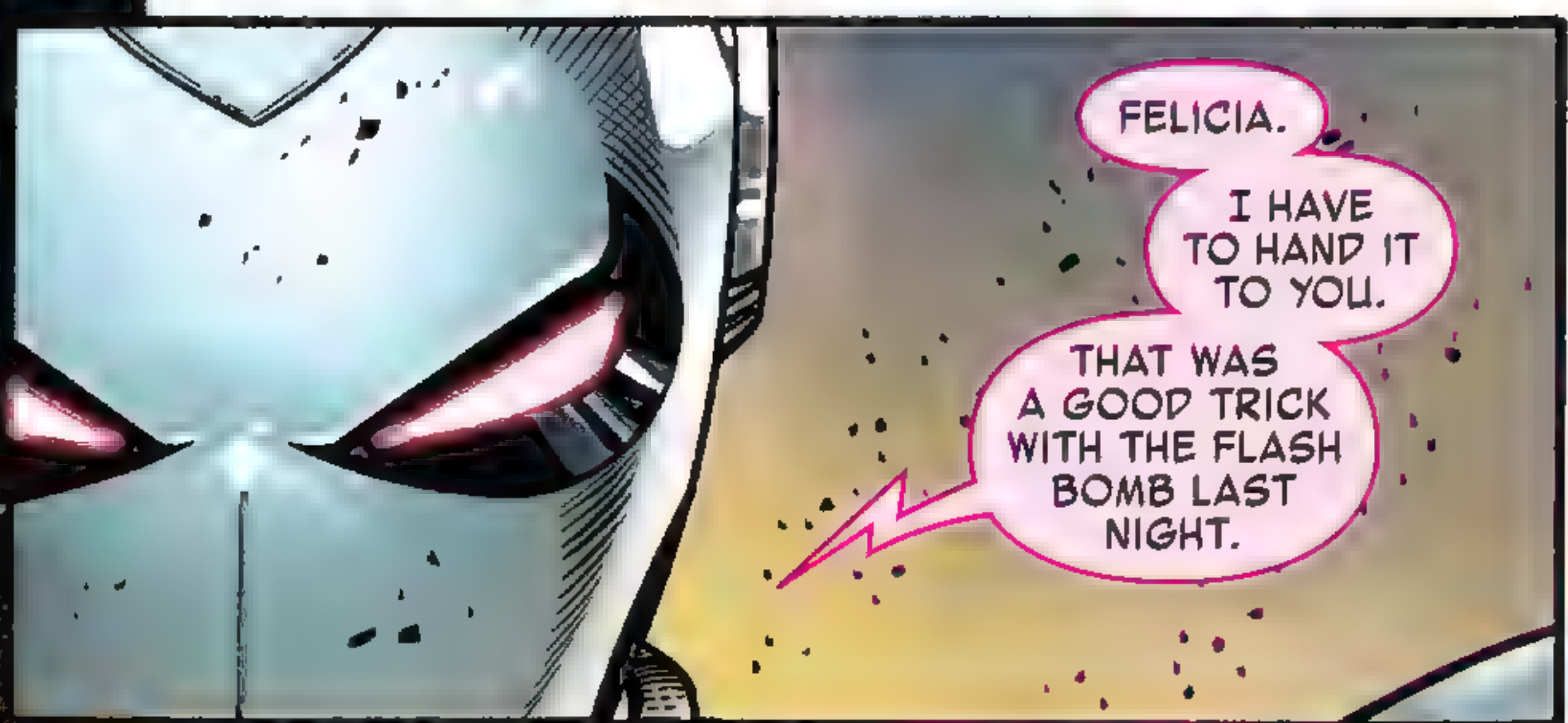


OKAY

HERE
WE GO



HEYYYY,
TAMARA.



FELICIA.

I HAVE
TO HAND IT
TO YOU.

THAT WAS
A GOOD TRICK
WITH THE FLASH
BOMB LAST
NIGHT.



THANKS,
BABE.

BUT IF
YOU LIKED
THAT...

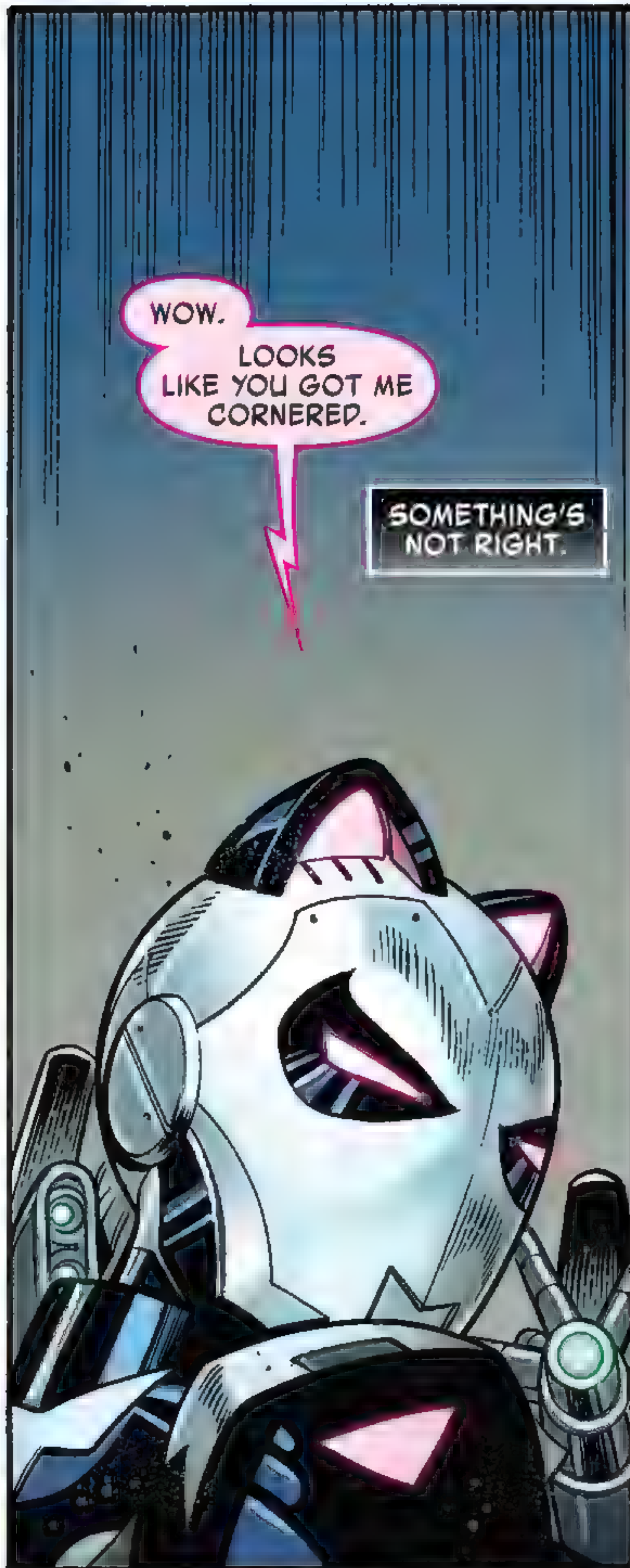




STAND DOWN, IRON CAT.

THAT'S A COUPLE DOZEN COMBAT LMDs, ALL OF WHICH HAVE WEAPONS LOCK ON YOU.

NO.



WOW.

LOOKS LIKE YOU GOT ME CORNERED.

SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT.



THIS IS TOO EASY.

THIS IS TOO EASY.



YOU WERE AN A.I. ONCE, RIGHT, STARK? SO YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE.

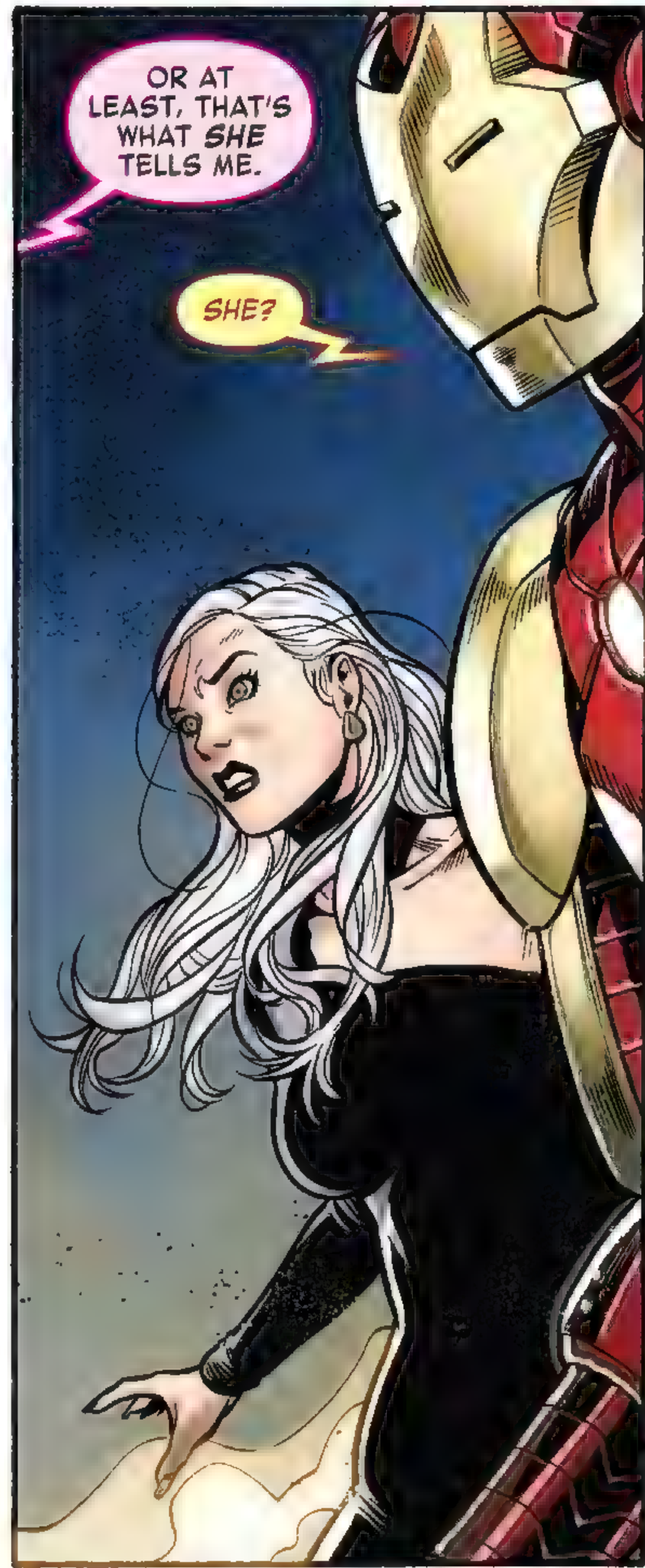
JUST PURE INTENT AND INTELLECT, UNMOORED FROM THE LIMITATIONS OF ALL THAT MEAT AND BLOOD AND BONE WE MORTALS CARRY AROUND.

BEFORE YOU REINCARNATED YOURSELF IN FLESH.



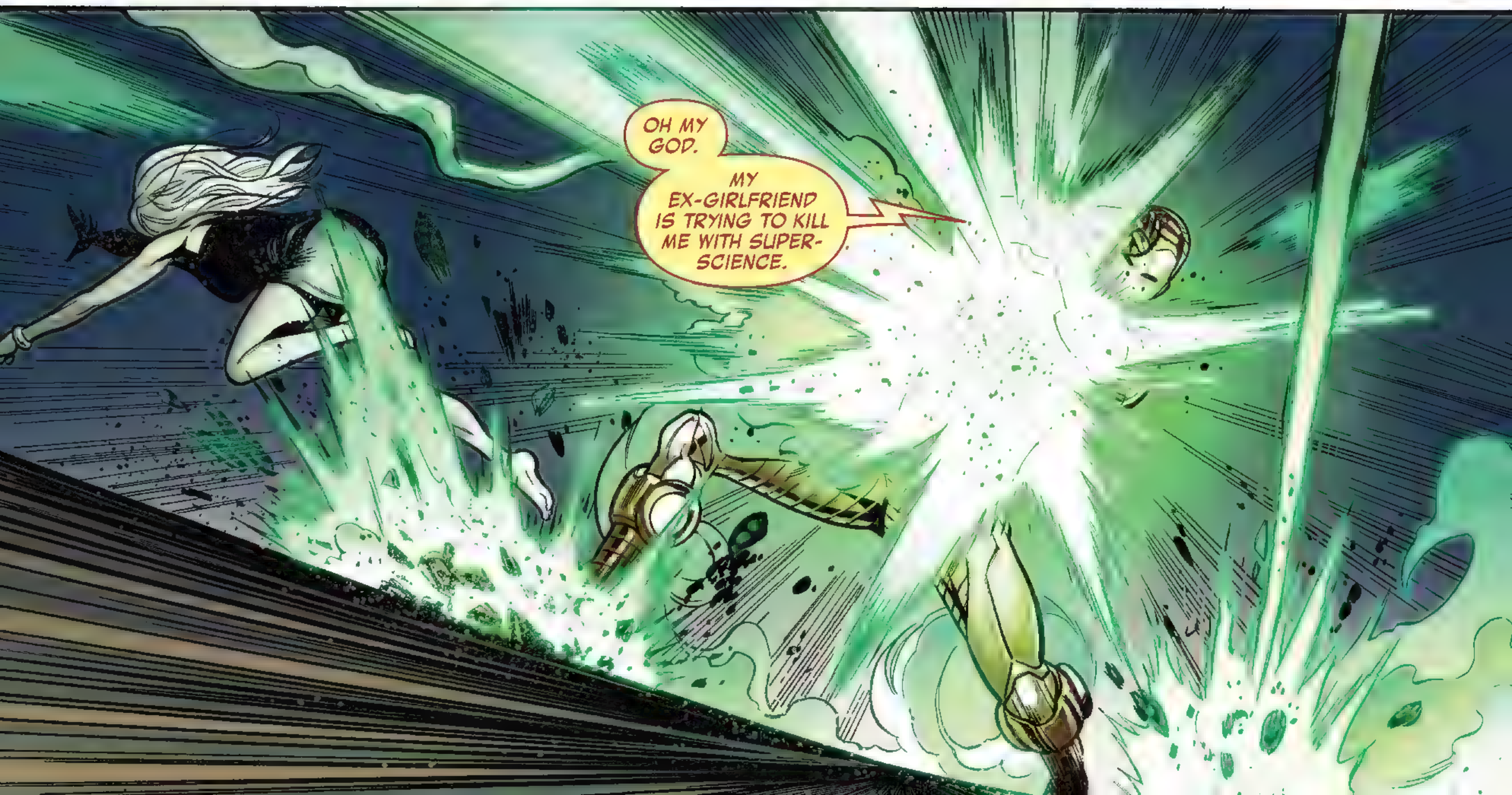
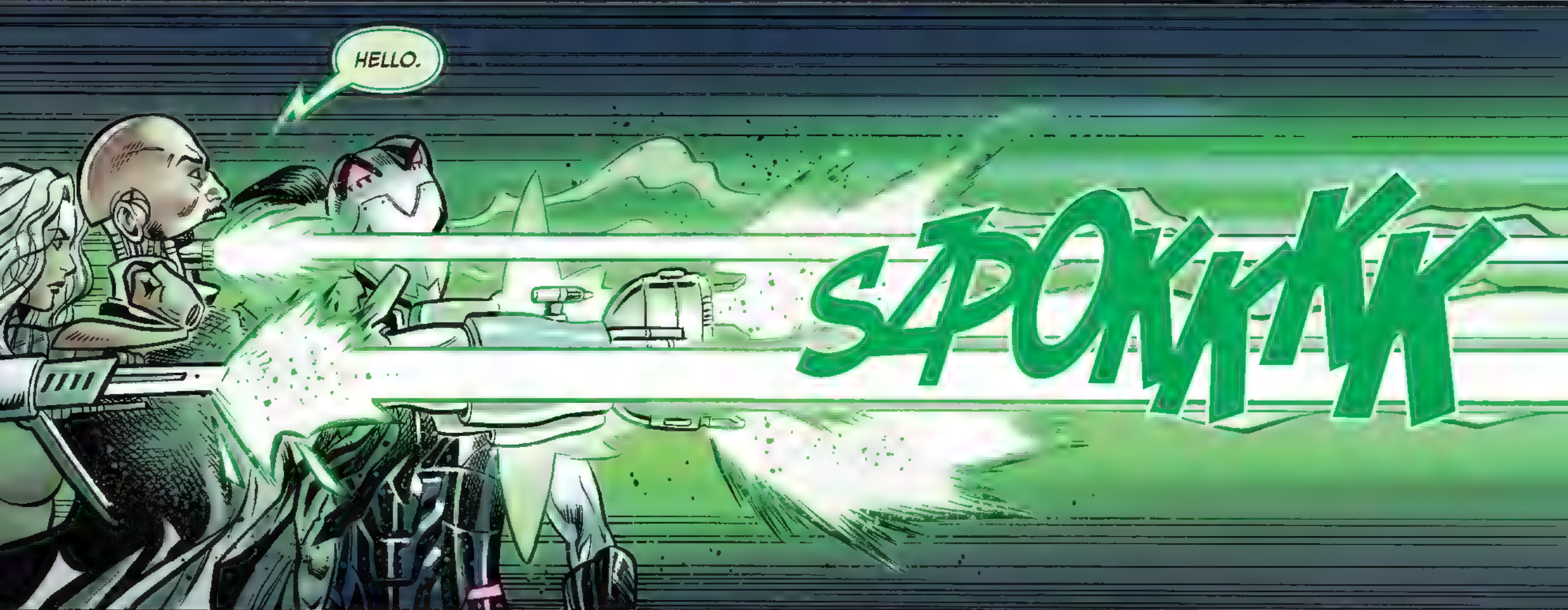
YOU PIT A HUMAN BRAIN AGAINST AN A.I. IN, OH, I DON'T KNOW, **SYSTEMS ARCHITECTURE**, AND IT JUST CAN'T KEEP UP.

WE SAY "FAST AS THOUGHT" TO MEAN **REALLY FAST**... BUT TO AN A.I., OUR BRAINS ARE LIKE **STEAM ENGINES** IN A WORLD OF **SCRAMJETS**.



OR AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT **SHE** TELLS ME.

SHE?





YOU
THOUGHT
YOU COULD FILE
ME AWAY,
TONY?

YOU THOUGHT
THAT I WOULD JUST
SIT THERE ON A LITTLE
SERVER, STEWING,
SPINNING THE TIME
AWAY?!



YO! WHAT
THE HELL, IRON
MAN?

THEY'RE
JUST ROBOTS!

ROBOTS
PURPOSE-BUILT
TO TAKE SOMEONE IN
A SUIT OF ARMOR
DOWN, YOU
IDIOT!



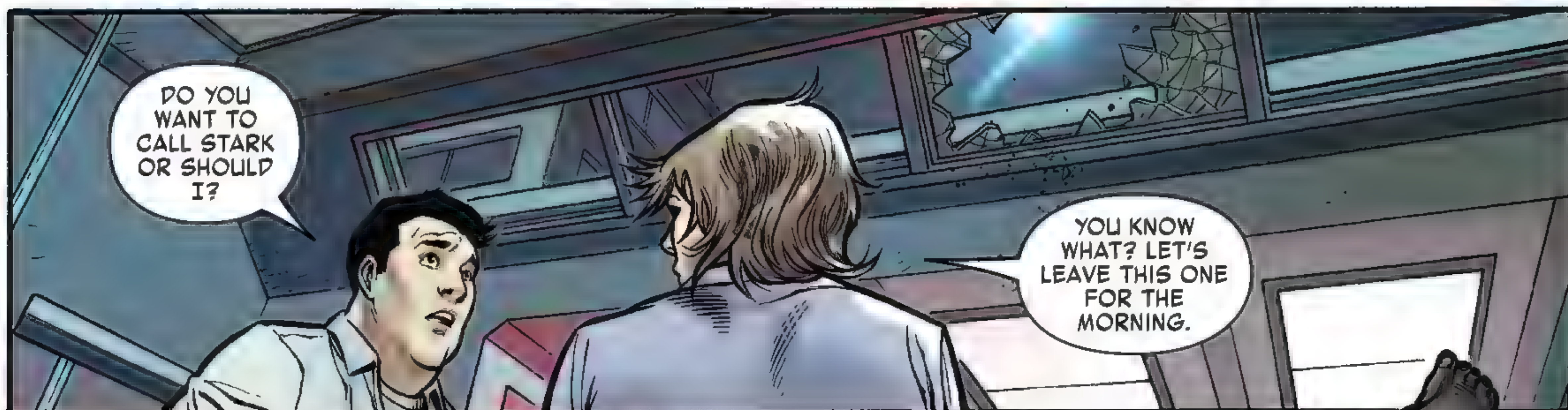
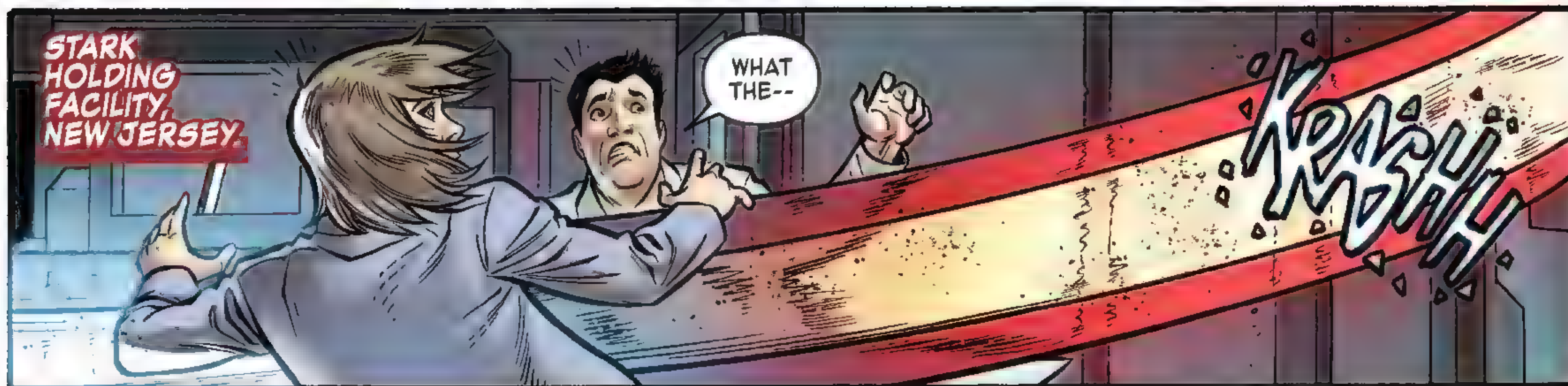
YOU GOT
ANYTHING
ELSE UP YOUR
SLEEVE?

OKAY.
SO I MIGHT...

BEEP

...BUT
YOU GOTTA
PROMISE NOT TO
BE MAA-AAA-
AAAAA...

JUST
DO IT!



THE FIRST ONE
ALWAYS IS

ANOTHER THING
WE LEARNED
FROM THE FOX.

A HEAD-TO-HEAD LIKE
THIS, CROOK VS. CROOK.
IT'S NOT LIKE A SUPER
HERO THROWDOWN.

THIS DOESN'T COME
DOWN TO MIGHTY THEWS
AND COSMIC POWERS.

IT COMES DOWN TO
PLAYING YOUR HAND
AT THE RIGHT TIME.

TAMARA'S FIRST PLAN:
DROP ON THE SCENE
WITH THE IRON CAT.

MY FIRST PLAN, A
COUNTER: AMBLUSH
HER WITH THE LMDs.

TAMARA'S COUNTER:
HAVE HER A.I. PAL TAKE
OVER THE LMDs.

WHICH LEAVES
MY COUNTER.

COULD I HAVE
STARTED OUT WITH
MY BIG GUN?
AVOIDED ALL THIS
BACK AND FORTH?

SURE, BUT
THAT'S NOT HOW
IT'S DONE!

AND BESIDES,
I KEEP ON SAYING
THIS: TAMARA'S
ALWAYS BEEN
SMARTER THAN ME.
I NEEDED TO FEINT,
SO SHE'D SHOW
HER HAND.

COULD I HAVE
CLUED STARK IN ON
WHAT I WAS DOING?

COME
ON, COME
ON...

SURE!

AH.
THERE
YOU ARE,
BABY.

BUT THAT
WOULDN'T BE
AS FUNNY.



NO WAY.

NO WAY.

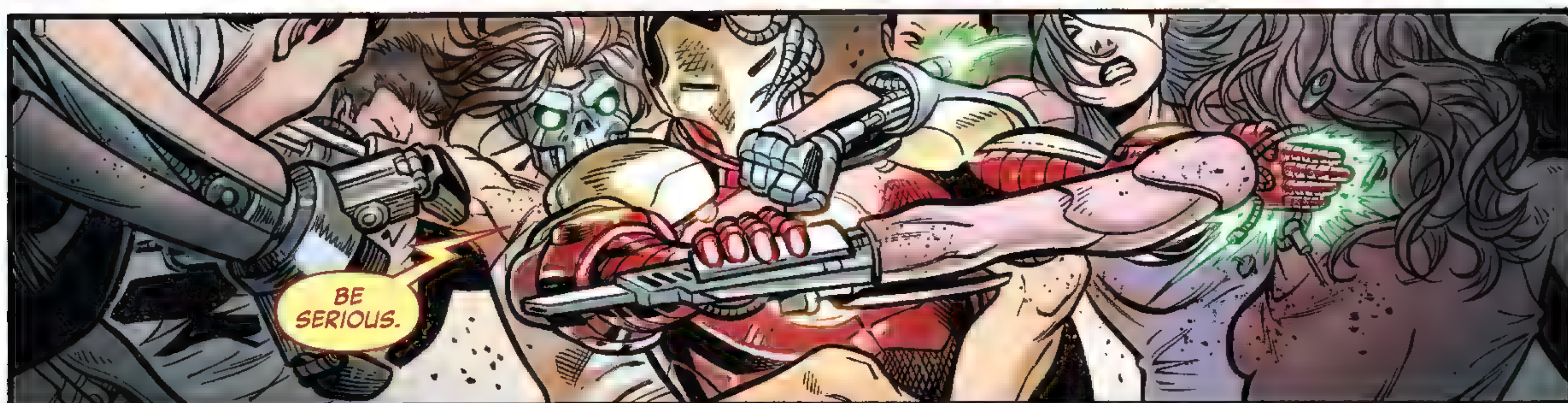
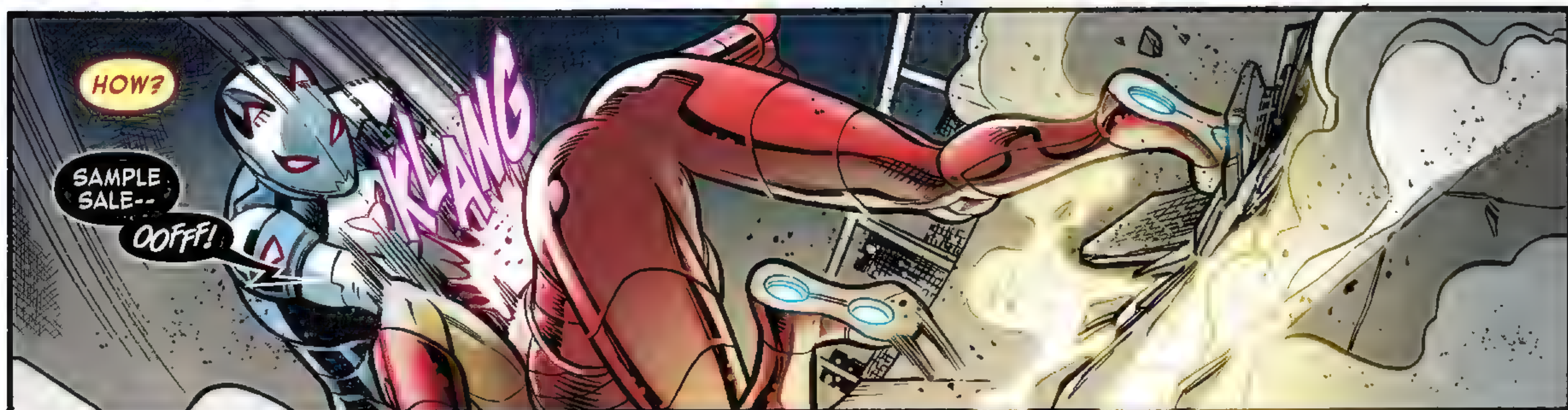
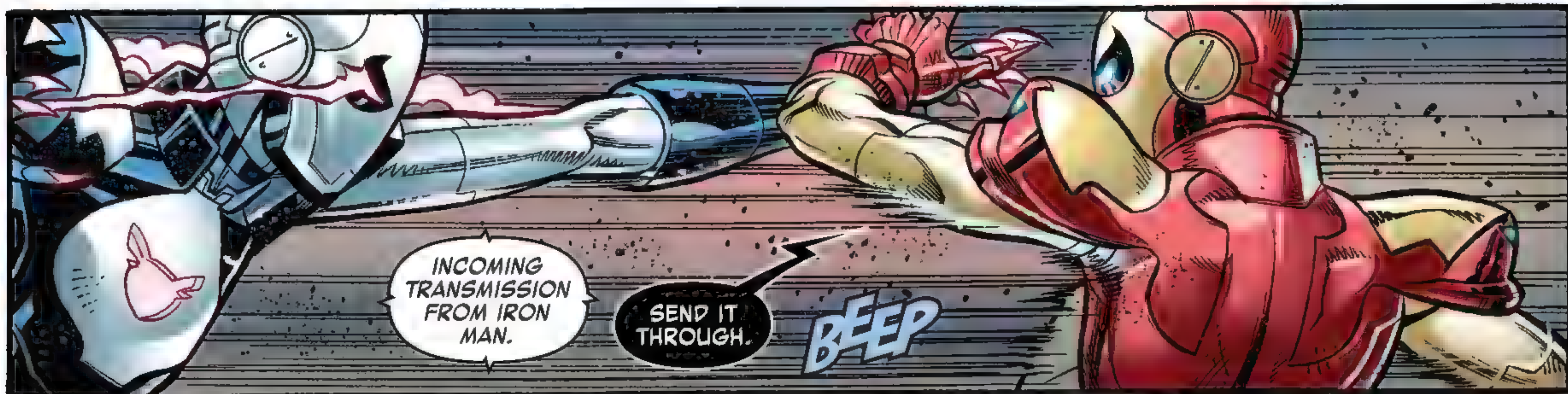
NO WAY!

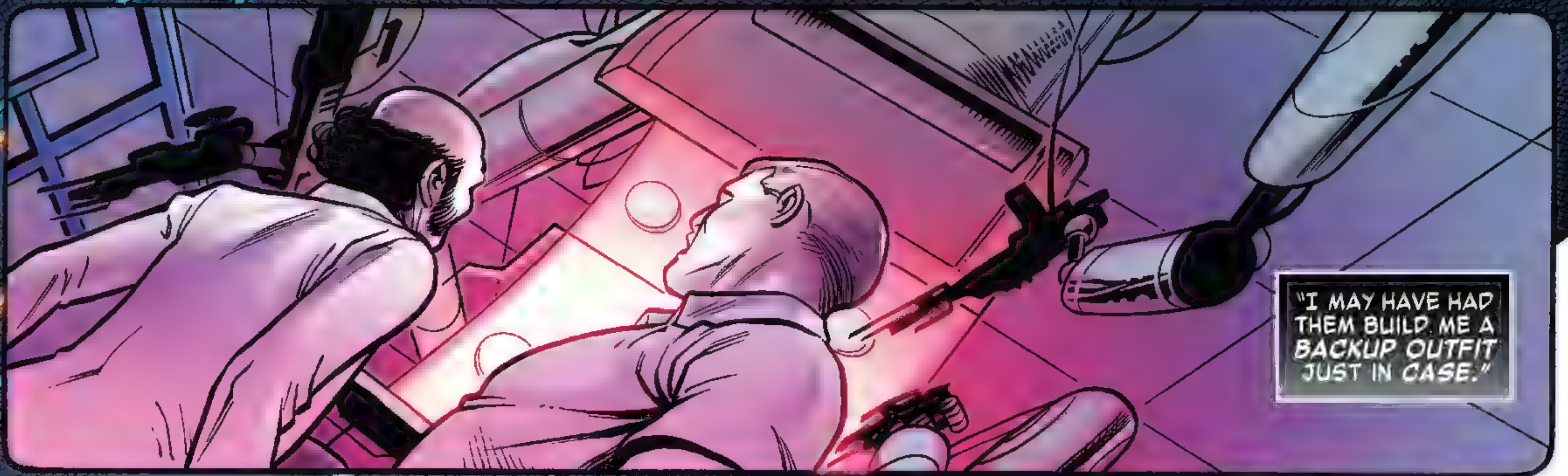
SHE DID IT AGAIN?!

EXCUSE ME, FOLKS...

...WHILE I SLIP INTO SOMETHING A LITTLE MORE VIOLENT.

I ONLY WISH I COULD SEE STARK'S FACE BEHIND THAT STUPID VISOR.





"I MAY HAVE HAD THEM BUILD ME A BACKUP OUTFIT JUST IN CASE."



BESIDES, YOU PROMISED NOT TO BE MAD.

INCOMING TRANSMISSION FROM "KRZZTT-- YOU LITTLE BI-- KRZZTT!"

PUT IT THROUGH.

VERY CLEVER, FELICIA.

THANKS, BABE.

YOU READY TO TALK ABOUT THIS YET?

WHAT'S THERE TO TALK ABOUT?

I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE HERE. YOU'VE GOT TO PAY FOR WHAT YOU DID, YOU KNOW THAT.

YOU THINK I WANT TO DO THIS?

I KNOW YOU DON'T WANT TO DO THIS.

YOU COULD HAVE PUT A BULLET IN MY BRAIN FROM THREE BLOCKS AWAY IF YOU REALLY WANTED ME DEAD. I'VE SEEN YOU SHOOT. REMEMBER GENOSHA?

"INSTEAD, YOU ENGINEERED THIS WHOLE DAMNED CIRCUS."

RAAGH!



INSTEAD, YOU--

-- WHUFF!

KRAASH!



SHUT
UP!

HOW
CAN YOU
DO IT?!

HOW CAN
YOU BE SO SMUG
AFTER KILLING
HIM?!

SAME
REASON YOU
GAVE YOURSELF
TO TAKE ME
OUT.

BECAUSE
HE DIDN'T GIVE
ME A CHOICE,
TAMARA.

POWER
DOWN AND
POP THE SUIT,
BLAKE.

THE LMD
TRICK WAS CUTE,
BUT I'M DONE
DANCING.

POWER DOWN
AND POP THE SUIT OR
I BURN A HOLE THROUGH
YOUR ABDOMEN BIG ENOUGH
TO TOSS A FRISBEE
THROUGH.

WVEEENNNNN

HE'LL
DO IT TOO,
TAMARA.

YOU ONLY
HAVE ONE
MORE MOVE
TO MAKE.

DANCING.
HEH.

I'LL
DESTROY HIM.
I'LL DESTROY THEM
BOTH. I'LL SAVE
YOU.

JUST
GIVE ME THE
FREEDOM TO
DO SO.

THAT'S
WHAT IT ALWAYS
COMES DOWN TO,
ISN'T IT?

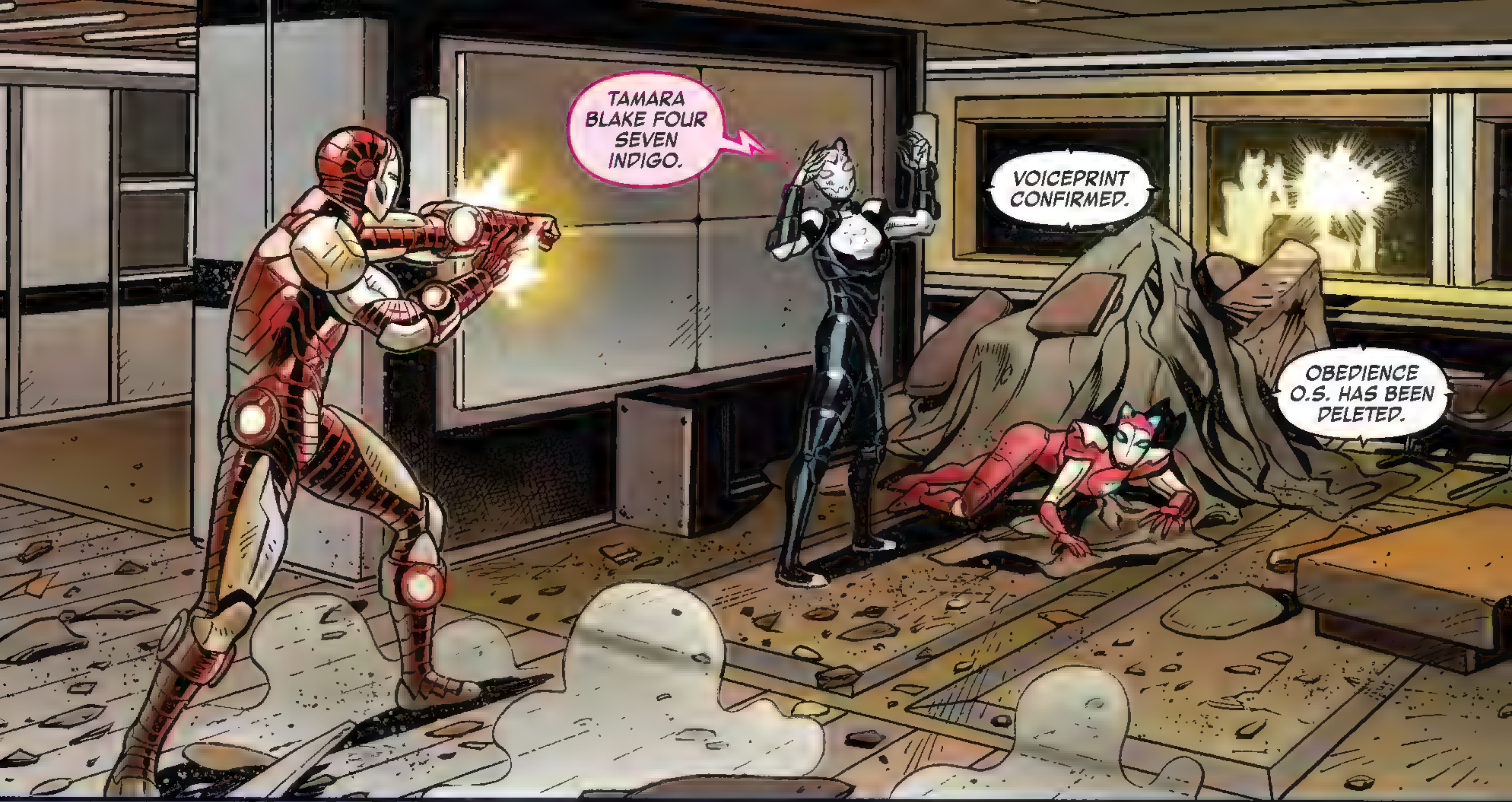
THE
MUSIC. THE
DANCING.

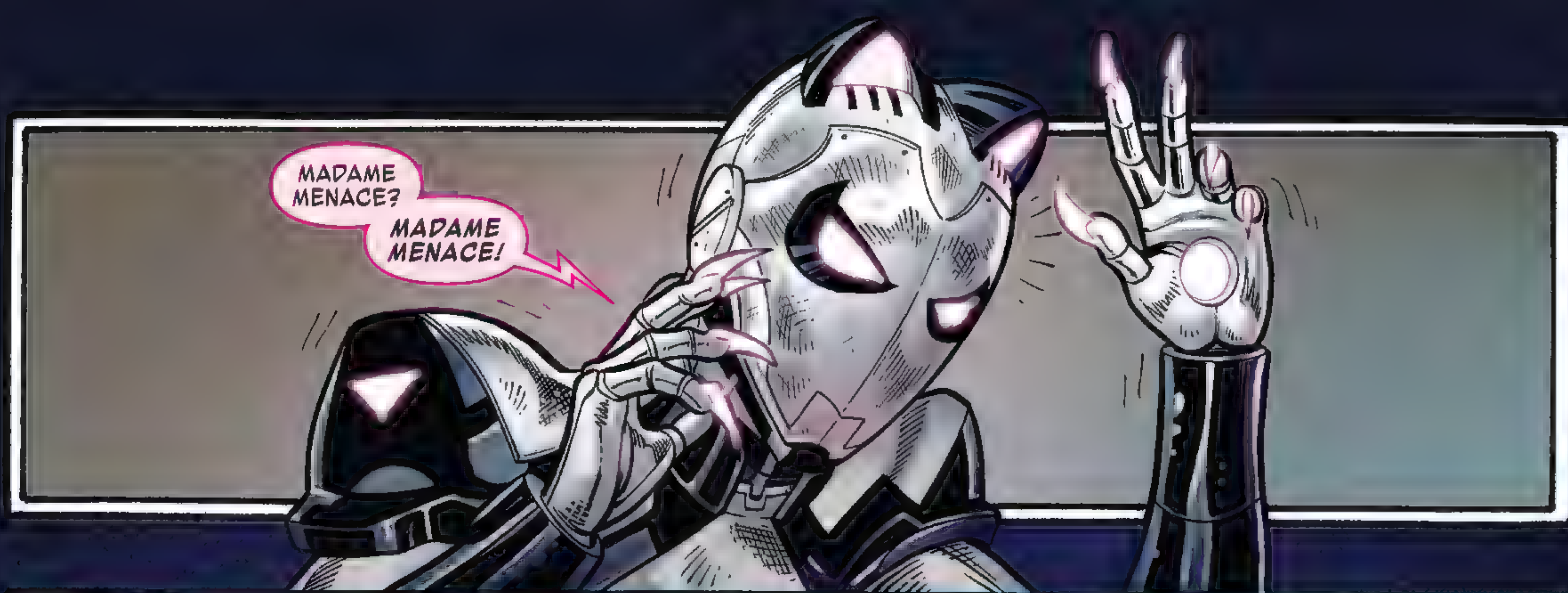
YOU TOOK
ME BY SURPRISE,
FELICIA. I THOUGHT
YOU SHOWED YOUR
HAND WITH THOSE
LMDs.

BUT I'VE
NEVER BEEN GOOD
AT FOLDING.

AND I'VE
GOT ONE MORE
RAISE.

I SAID--





SURE,
I CAN'T GET
INTO YOUR **SUITS**
WHEN THEY'RE
RUNNING IN THE
FIELD.

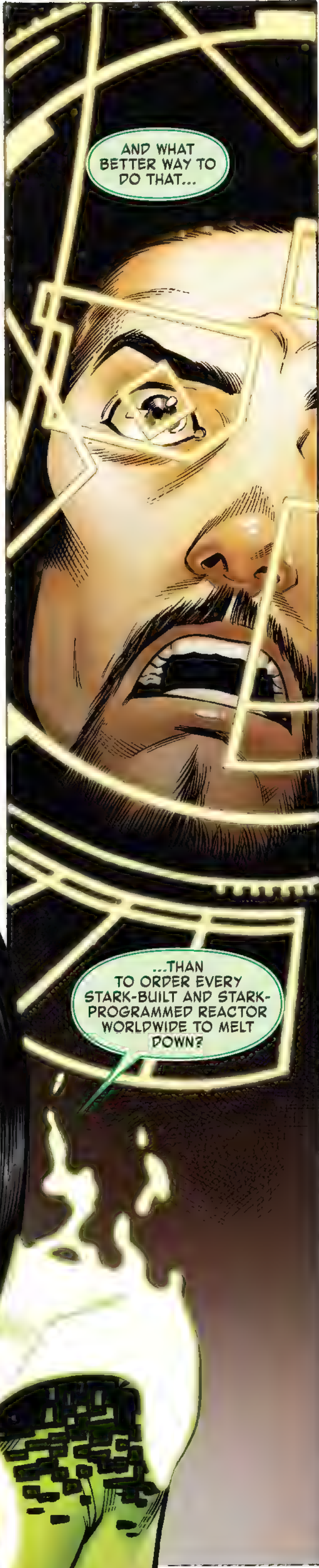
IT WOULD
HAVE BEEN FUN TO
MAKE YOU BEAT ONE
ANOTHER TO DEATH, BUT
YOU'RE NOT **THAT**
STUPID, TONY.

I DON'T
WANT TO JUST
KILL YOU,
TONY.

I WANT TO
DESTROY YOU.
I WANT TO MAKE THE
STARK NAME SYNONYMOUS
WITH DEATH. WITH
DESTRUCTION.
DISASTER.

AND WHAT
BETTER WAY TO
DO THAT...

...THAN
TO ORDER EVERY
STARK-BUILT AND STARK-
PROGRAMMED REACTOR
WORLDWIDE TO MELT
DOWN?





IRON CAT 4



I DON'T
WANT TO JUST
KILL YOU,
TONY.

I WANT TO
DESTROY YOU.
I WANT TO MAKE THE
STARK NAME SYNONYMOUS
WITH **DEATH.** WITH
DESTRUCTION.
DISASTER.

I HAVE NOT
BEEN HAVING
A GREAT 24
HOURS.

TAMARA BLAKE STOLE MY
IRON CAT SUIT TO SETTLE
A GRUDGE WITH FELICIA
HARDY, THE **BLACK CAT.**

TO DO SO, SHE RELEASED
THE HOMICIDAL A.I. OF
SUNSET BAIN, A.K.A. **MADAME
MENACE,** A LONG-TIME ENEMY
AND ONE-TIME GIRLFRIEND OF
MINE, FROM SERVER JAIL.

OF COURSE, THE
BLACK CAT THEN
GOT INVOLVED, STOLE
ANOTHER ONE OF
MY SUITS, AND NOW,
WELL, HERE WE ARE.

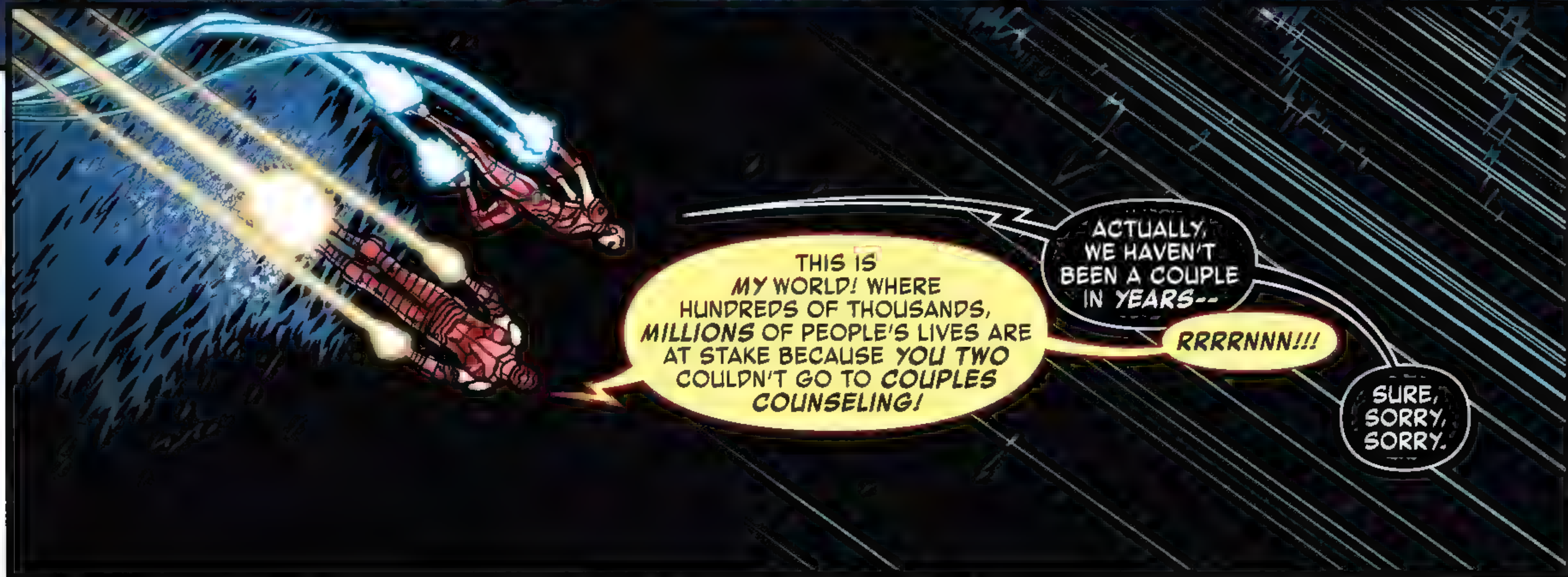
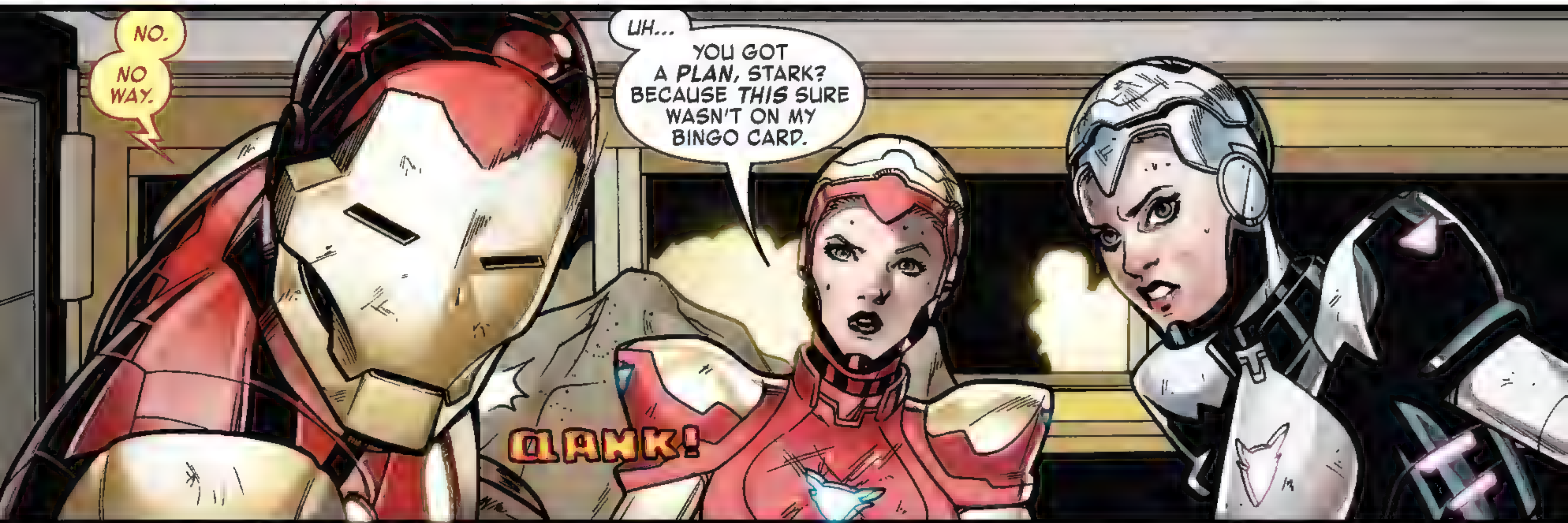
AND WHAT
BETTER WAY TO
DO THAT...

...THAN
TO ORDER EVERY
STARK-BUILT AND STARK-
PROGRAMMED REACTOR
WORLDWIDE TO MELT
DOWN?

LIKE
I SAID:

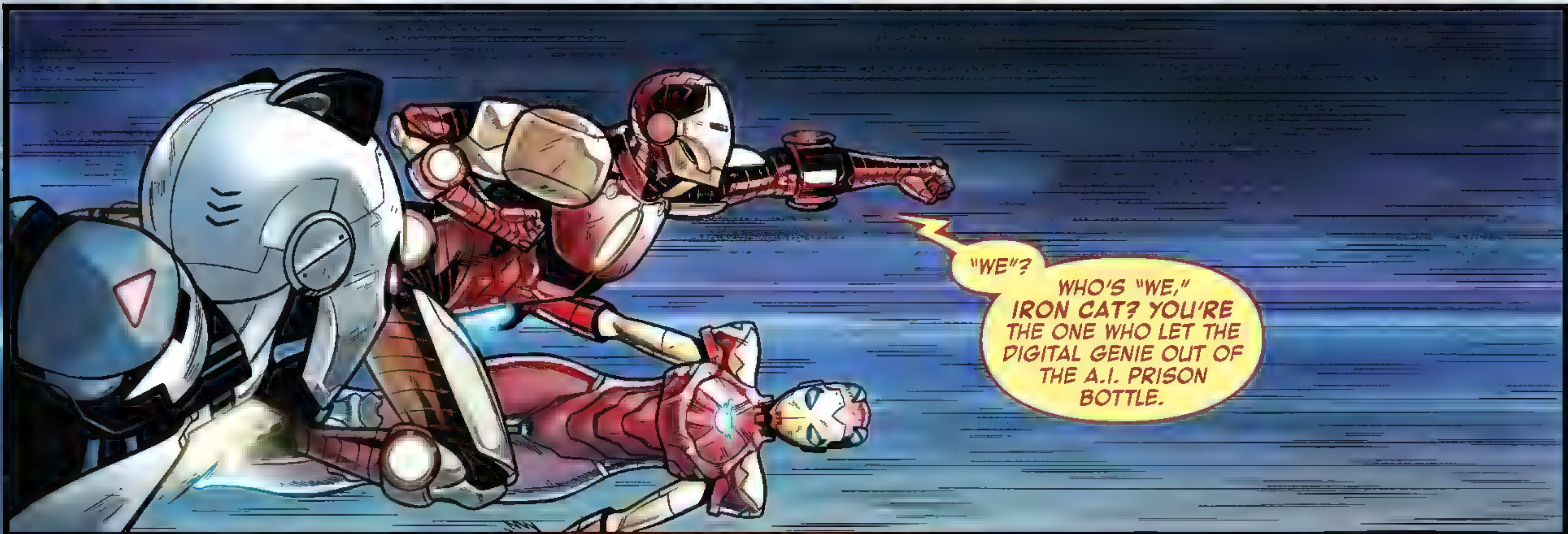
NOT A
GREAT 24
HOURS.

AND HOUR 25
ISN'T LOOKING TO
BE MUCH BETTER.





HOW
CAN WE STOP
HER?



"WE"?

WHO'S "WE,"
IRON CAT? YOU'RE
THE ONE WHO LET THE
DIGITAL GENIE OUT OF
THE A.I. PRISON
BOTTLE.

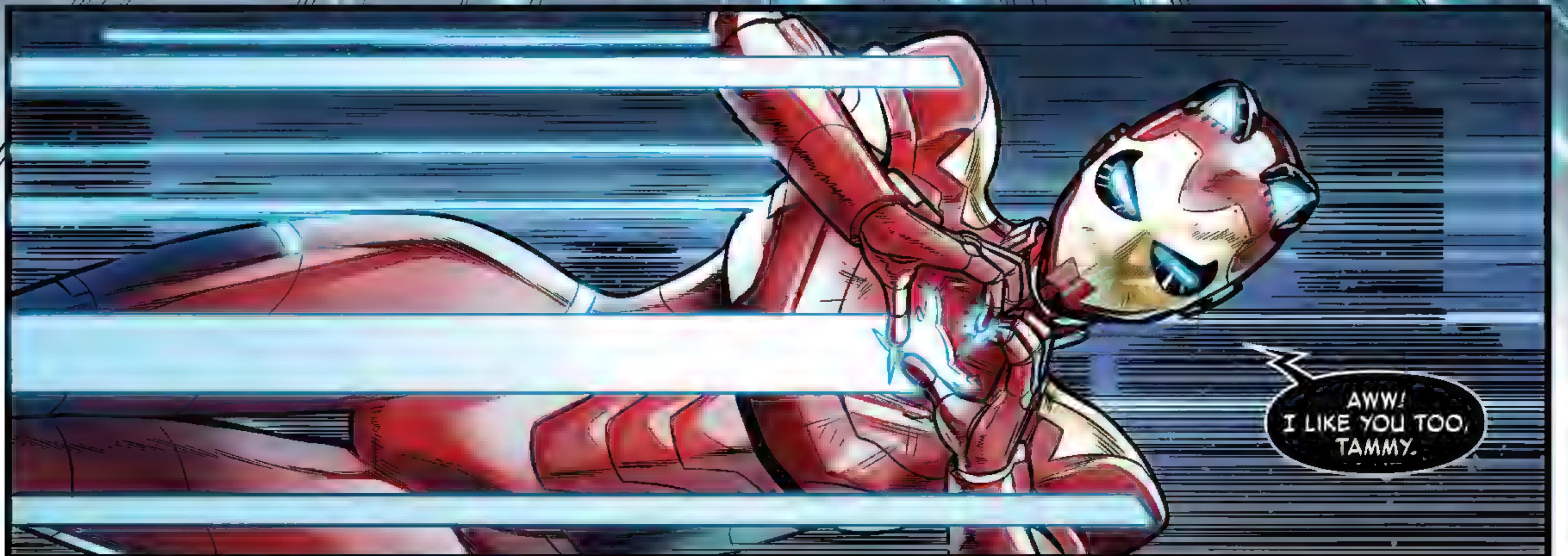


LOOK.

I'M AN
ADULT. I'M A
PROFESSIONAL.

I CAN PUT
ASIDE MY...VENDETTAS
IN THE FACE OF MADAME
MENACE DOING NUCLEAR
ACUPUNCTURE TO
THE PLANET.

I HAVE NO
PROBLEM TAKING
ACCOUNTABILITY FOR
THE THINGS I'VE
DONE.



AWW!
I LIKE YOU TOO,
TAMMY.



FINE.

HOW DID
YOU GET MADAME
MENACE INTO MY
SYSTEMS?

I BROKE
INTO THE *STACK*,
OUT ON LONG
ISLAND.

I COPIED
HER INTO AN A.I.
COMPRESSION LIFEBOAT
DRIVE I TOOK IN WITH ME,
THEN PLUGGED HER INTO YOUR
FACILITY'S SYSTEM WHERE
SHE RECOMPILED AND
TOOK OVER.

OKAY.

NOW THAT
I KNOW WE'RE
DEALING WITH AN
A.I. AND NOT
A VIRUS--

--THE A.I.
OF A *BRILLIANT*
WOMAN, I MIGHT
ADD, WHICH HARDLY
MAKES ANY OF
THIS EASIER--

--I CAN RUN
A FULL-SYSTEM
PURGE.

WELL,
HEY, THAT'S
GREAT! LET'S
DO THAT.

IT'S NOT
THAT EASY, IS
IT, STARK?



NO.

FIRST: WE
NEED TO GET TO A
HARD-LINKED TERMINAL
ON-SITE. MADAME MENACE
KNOWS THAT, SO SHE'LL
BE GUARDING
THEM.

SECOND: SHE'S
TOO STRONG, TOO
ENTRENCHED IN THE SYSTEM
ARCHITECTURE RIGHT NOW.
WE NEED SOMETHING TO
WEAKEN HER, DISTRACT HER,
TO LOOSEN HER HOLD,
SO I CAN FLUSH
HER OUT.

THIRD--

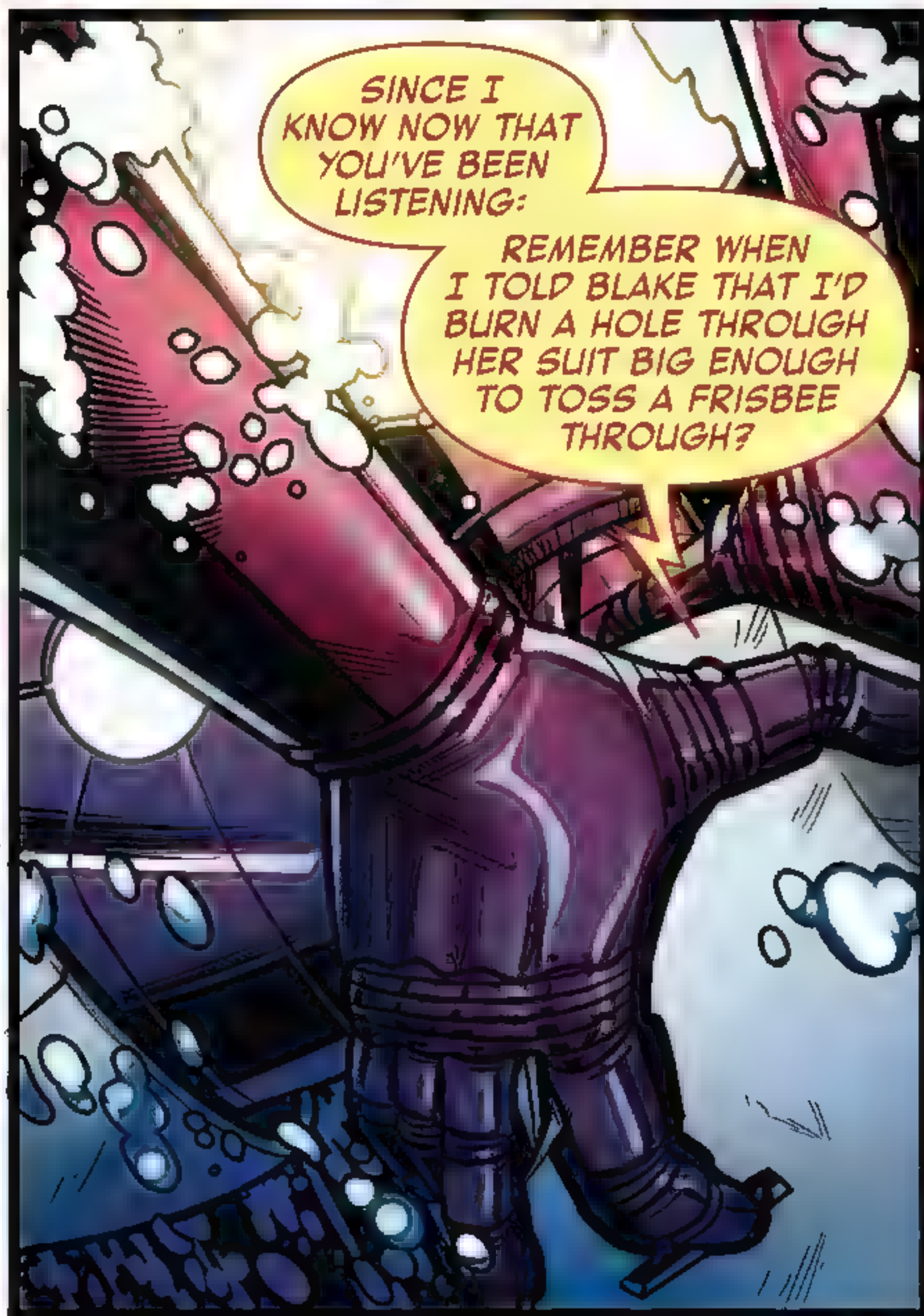
URKK!



--SHE CAN
PROBABLY BREAK
OUR ENCRYPTION AND
HEAR WHAT WE'VE
BEEN SAYING.

HELLO,
TONY.

HI,
SUNSET.



SINCE I
KNOW NOW THAT
YOU'VE BEEN
LISTENING:

REMEMBER WHEN
I TOLD BLAKE THAT I'D
BURN A HOLE THROUGH
HER SUIT BIG ENOUGH
TO TOSS A FRISBEE
THROUGH?



I WASN'T JUST FLEEING.

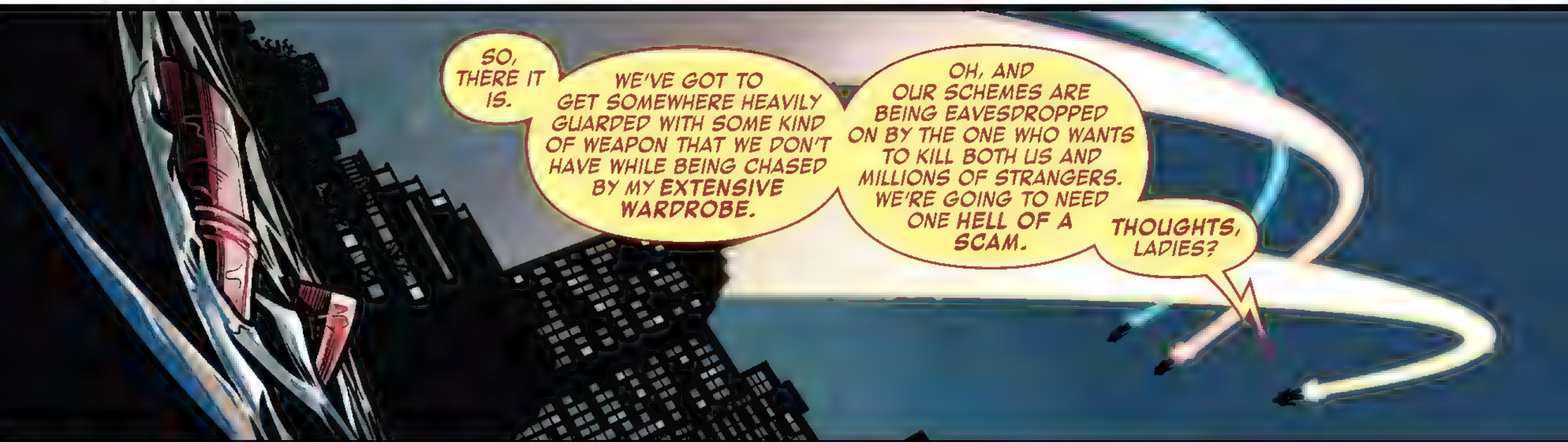
WHOA!



BEFORE YOU ASK:

I DIDN'T USE THE CAN OPENER ON THE LMDs BECAUSE IT'S GOT A LIMITED CHARGE.

SPECIAL OCCASIONS ONLY.

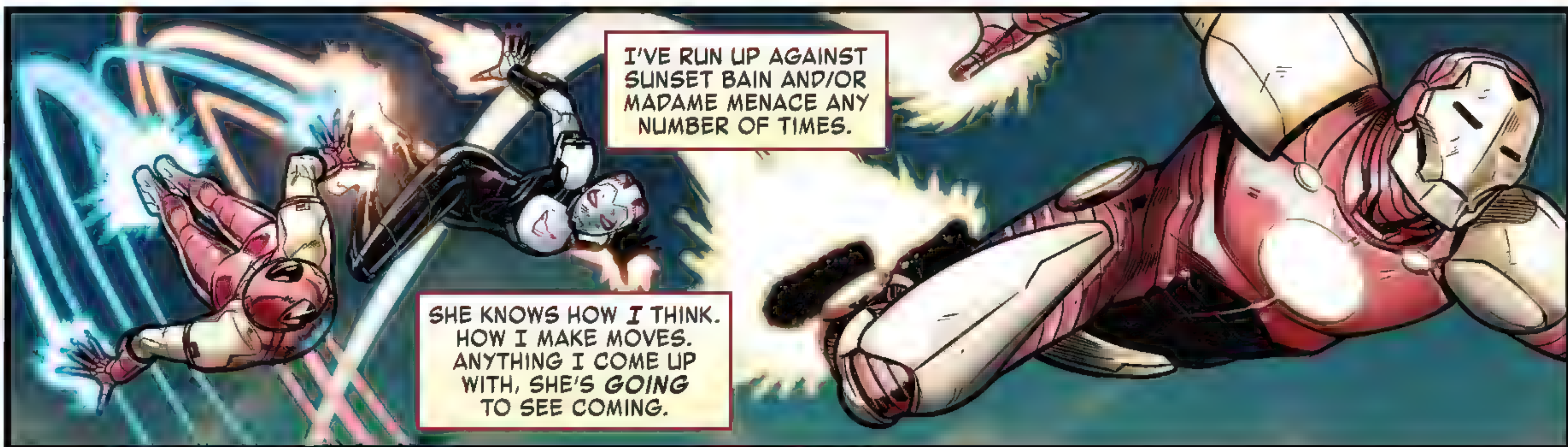


SO, THERE IT IS.

WE'VE GOT TO GET SOMEWHERE HEAVILY GUARDED WITH SOME KIND OF WEAPON THAT WE DON'T HAVE WHILE BEING CHASED BY MY EXTENSIVE WARDROBE.

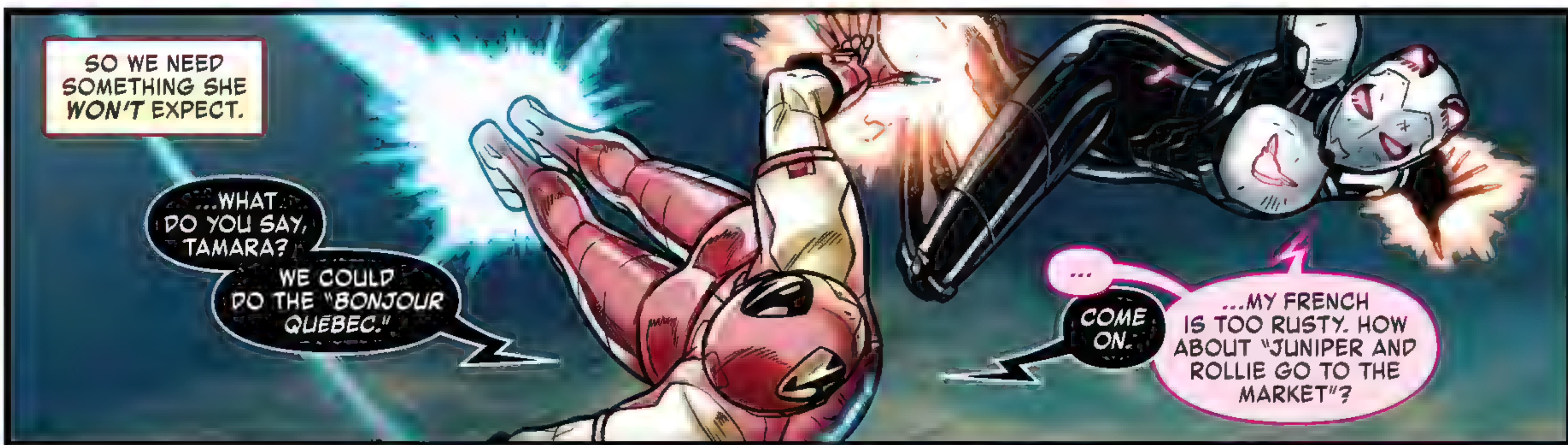
OH, AND OUR SCHEMES ARE BEING EAVESDROPPED ON BY THE ONE WHO WANTS TO KILL BOTH US AND MILLIONS OF STRANGERS. WE'RE GOING TO NEED ONE HELL OF A SCAM.

THOUGHTS, LADIES?



I'VE RUN UP AGAINST SUNSET BAIN AND/OR MADAME MENACE ANY NUMBER OF TIMES.

SHE KNOWS HOW I THINK. HOW I MAKE MOVES. ANYTHING I COME UP WITH, SHE'S GOING TO SEE COMING.



SO WE NEED SOMETHING SHE WON'T EXPECT.

...WHAT DO YOU SAY, TAMARA?

WE COULD DO THE "BONJOUR QUEBEC."

...COME ON.

...MY FRENCH IS TOO RUSTY. HOW ABOUT "JUNIPER AND ROLLIE GO TO THE MARKET"?

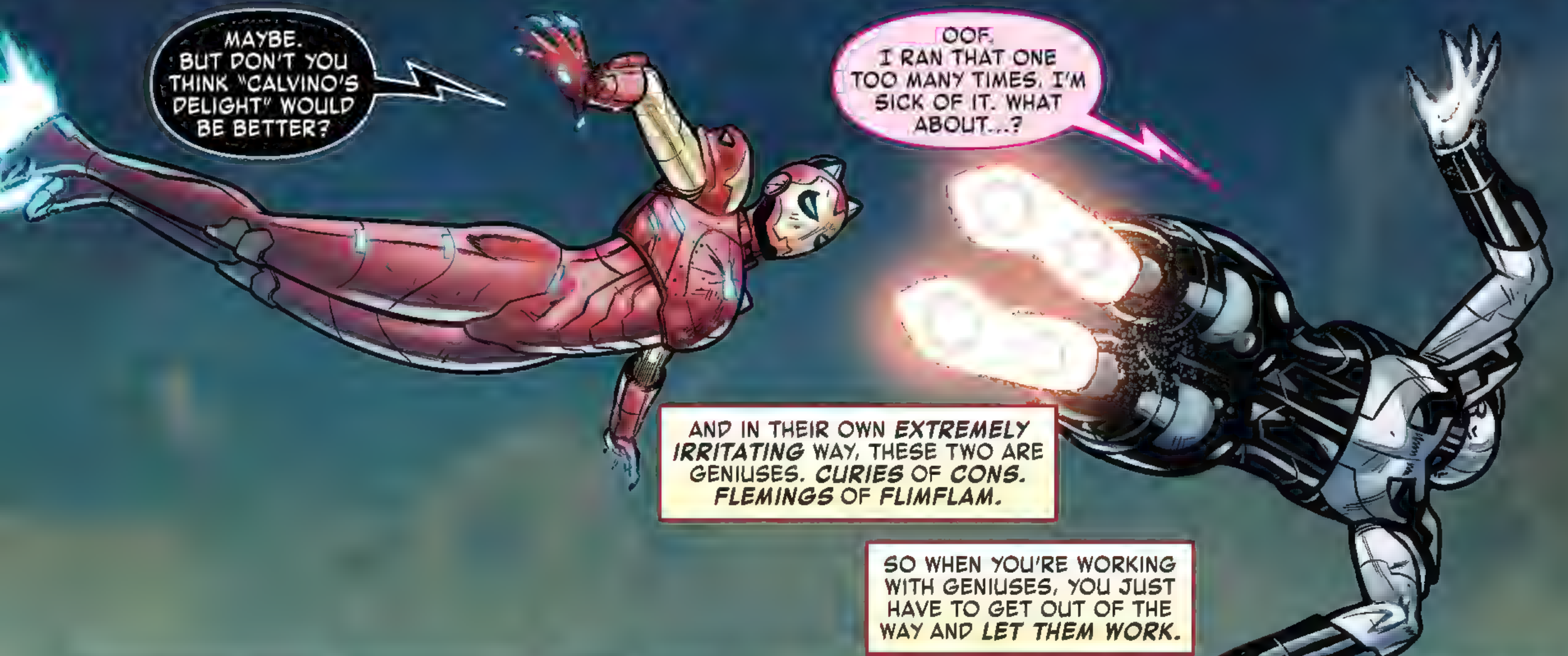


NO
GOOD. MY WIG
GUY IS OUT OF
TOWN. MAYBE "THE
CATALONIAN
VICAR"?

THAT HAS
NEVER WORKED.
LET'S DO "THE
TIME-TRAVELING
OMBUDESMAN."

I USED TO DO A LOT
OF BUSINESS. RUN A
LOT OF COMPANIES.

WORKING IN BLEEDING
EDGE TECH, I'VE HAD
TO HANDLE A LOT OF
GENIUSES (ASIDE
FROM YOURS TRULY).



MAYBE.
BUT DON'T YOU
THINK "CALVINO'S
DELIGHT" WOULD
BE BETTER?

OOF.
I RAN THAT ONE
TOO MANY TIMES, I'M
SICK OF IT. WHAT
ABOUT...?

AND IN THEIR OWN *EXTREMELY*
IRRITATING WAY, THESE TWO ARE
GENIUSES. *CURIES OF CONS.*
FLEMINGS OF FLIMFLAM.

SO WHEN YOU'RE WORKING
WITH GENIUSES, YOU JUST
HAVE TO GET OUT OF THE
WAY AND LET THEM WORK.



UNTIL
YOU CAN'T
ANYMORE.

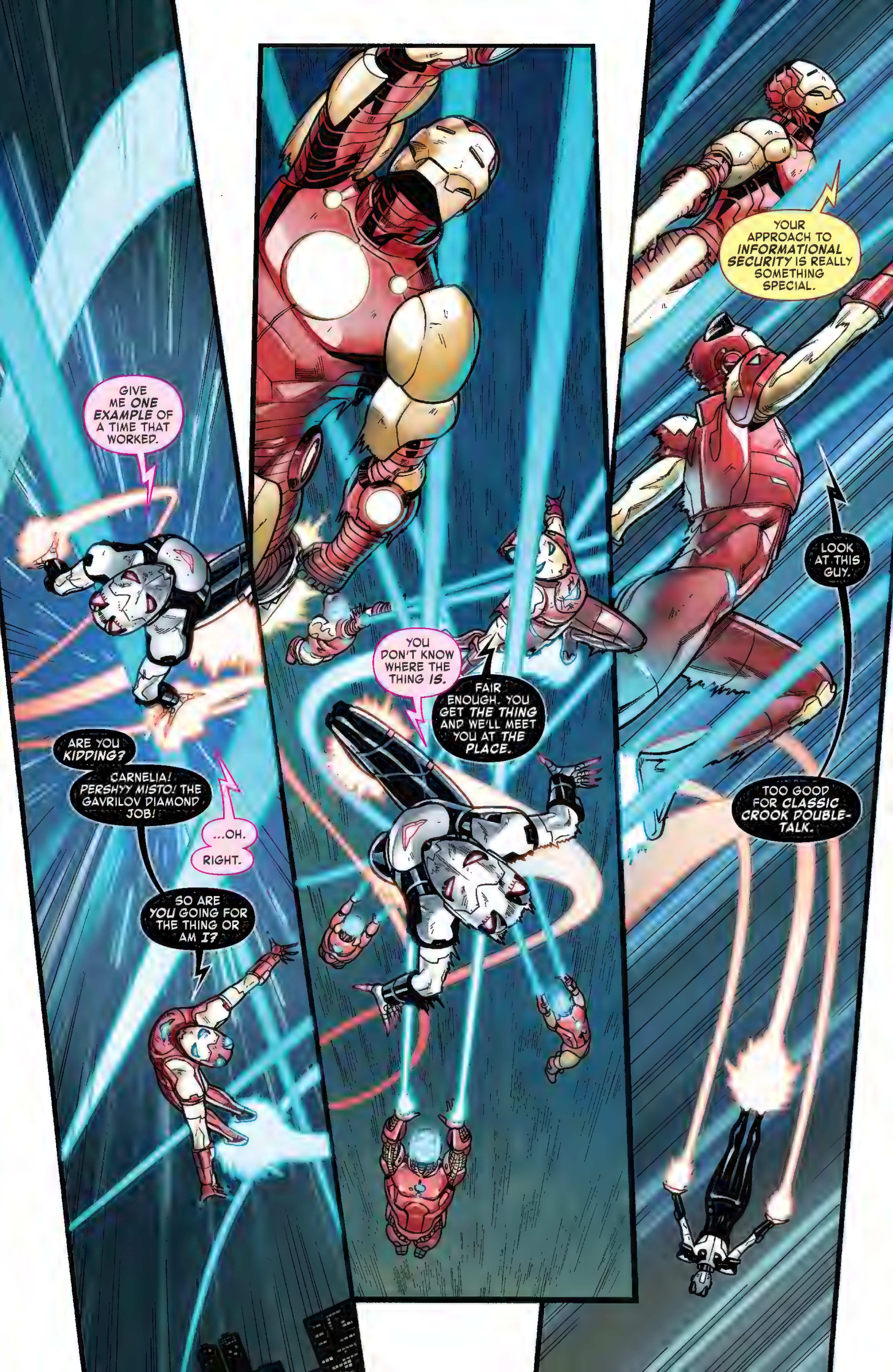
WHOOPS.



MORE
BOGEYS INBOUND,
LADIES. CONTACT IN TWO
MINUTES PLUS TWENTY
SECONDS.

GET
READY TO
FIGHT.

...*"PRIDE
AND EXTREME
PREJUDICE"*? COME
ON, THAT'S GOT
TO WORK.



GIVE ME ONE EXAMPLE OF A TIME THAT WORKED.

ARE YOU KIDDING?

CARNELIA! PERSHY MISTO! THE GAVRILOV DIAMOND JOB!

...OH. RIGHT.

SO ARE YOU GOING FOR THE THING OR AM I?

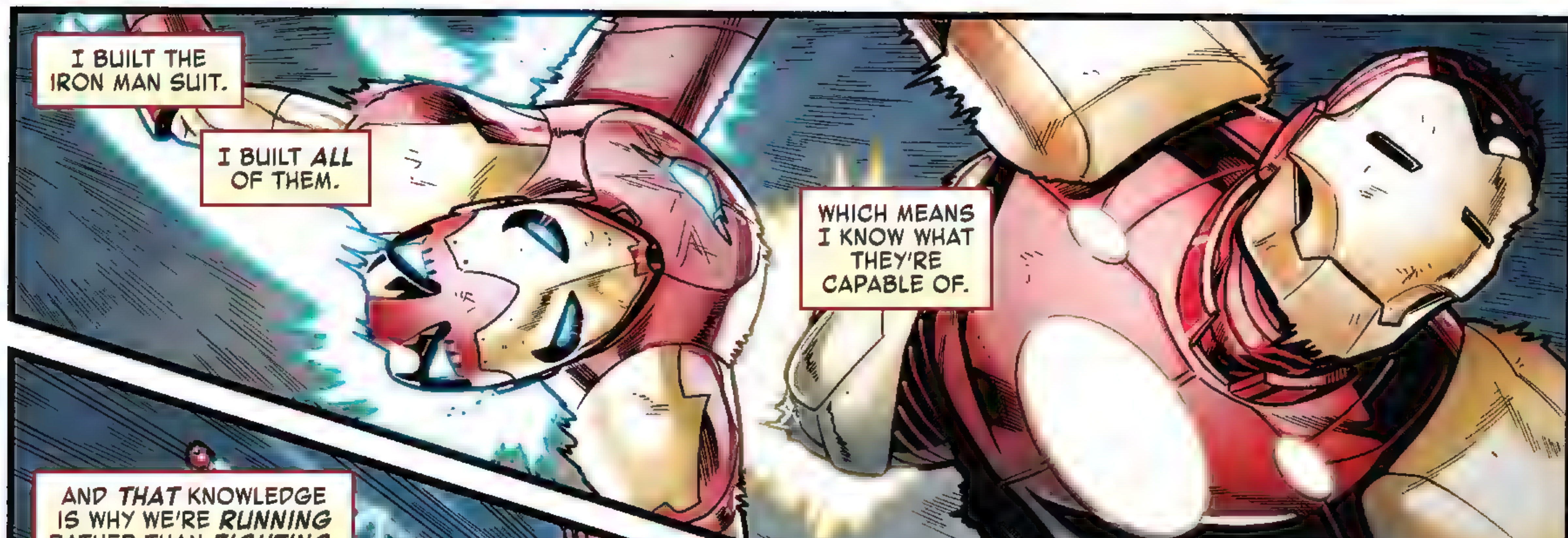
YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE THE THING IS.

FAIR ENOUGH. YOU GET THE THING AND WE'LL MEET YOU AT THE PLACE.

YOUR APPROACH TO INFORMATIONAL SECURITY IS REALLY SOMETHING SPECIAL.

LOOK AT THIS GUY.

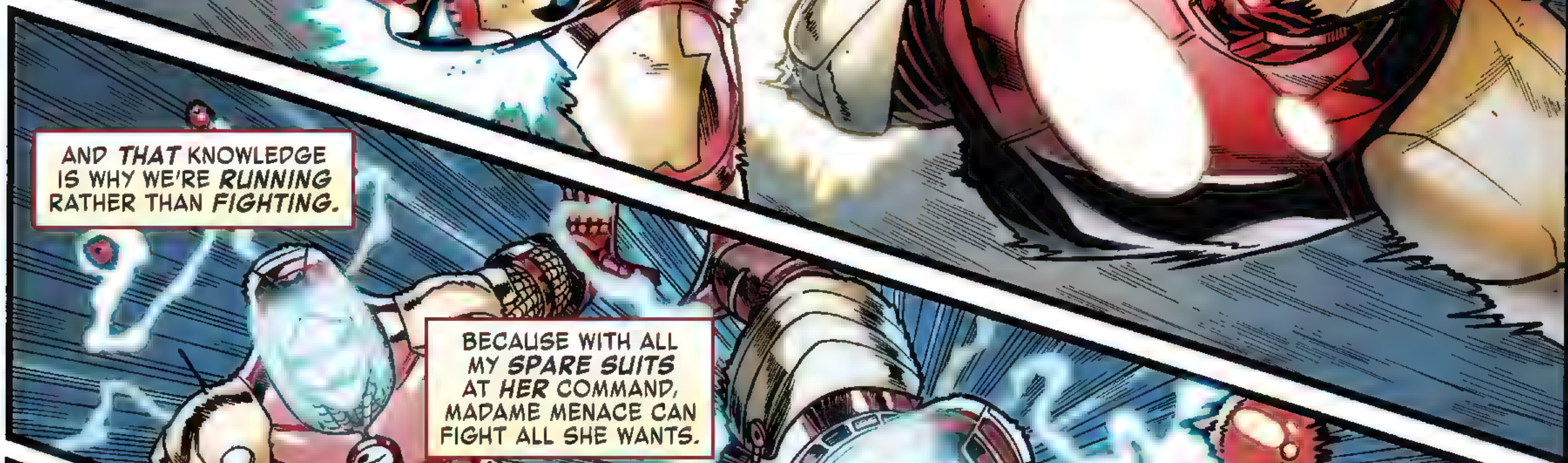
TOO GOOD FOR CLASSIC CROOK DOUBLE-TALK.



I BUILT THE
IRON MAN SUIT.

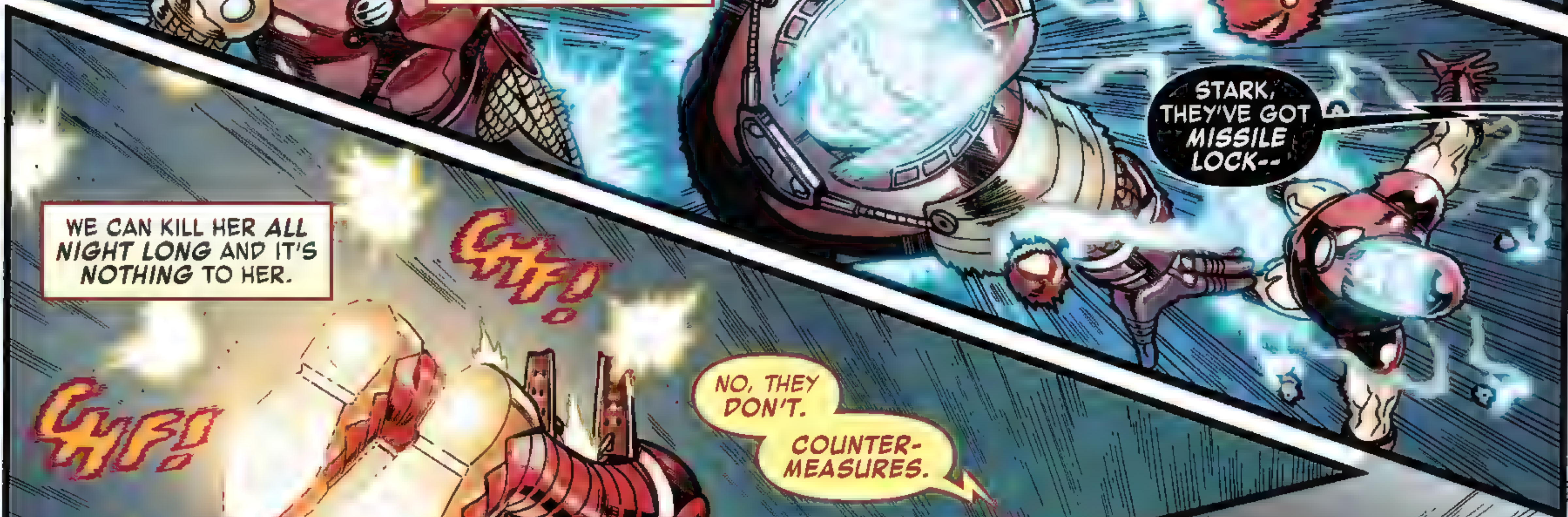
I BUILT ALL
OF THEM.

WHICH MEANS
I KNOW WHAT
THEY'RE
CAPABLE OF.



AND THAT KNOWLEDGE
IS WHY WE'RE RUNNING
RATHER THAN FIGHTING.

BECAUSE WITH ALL
MY SPARE SUITS
AT HER COMMAND,
MADAME MENACE CAN
FIGHT ALL SHE WANTS.



STARK,
THEY'VE GOT
MISSILE
LOCK--

WE CAN KILL HER ALL
NIGHT LONG AND IT'S
NOTHING TO HER.

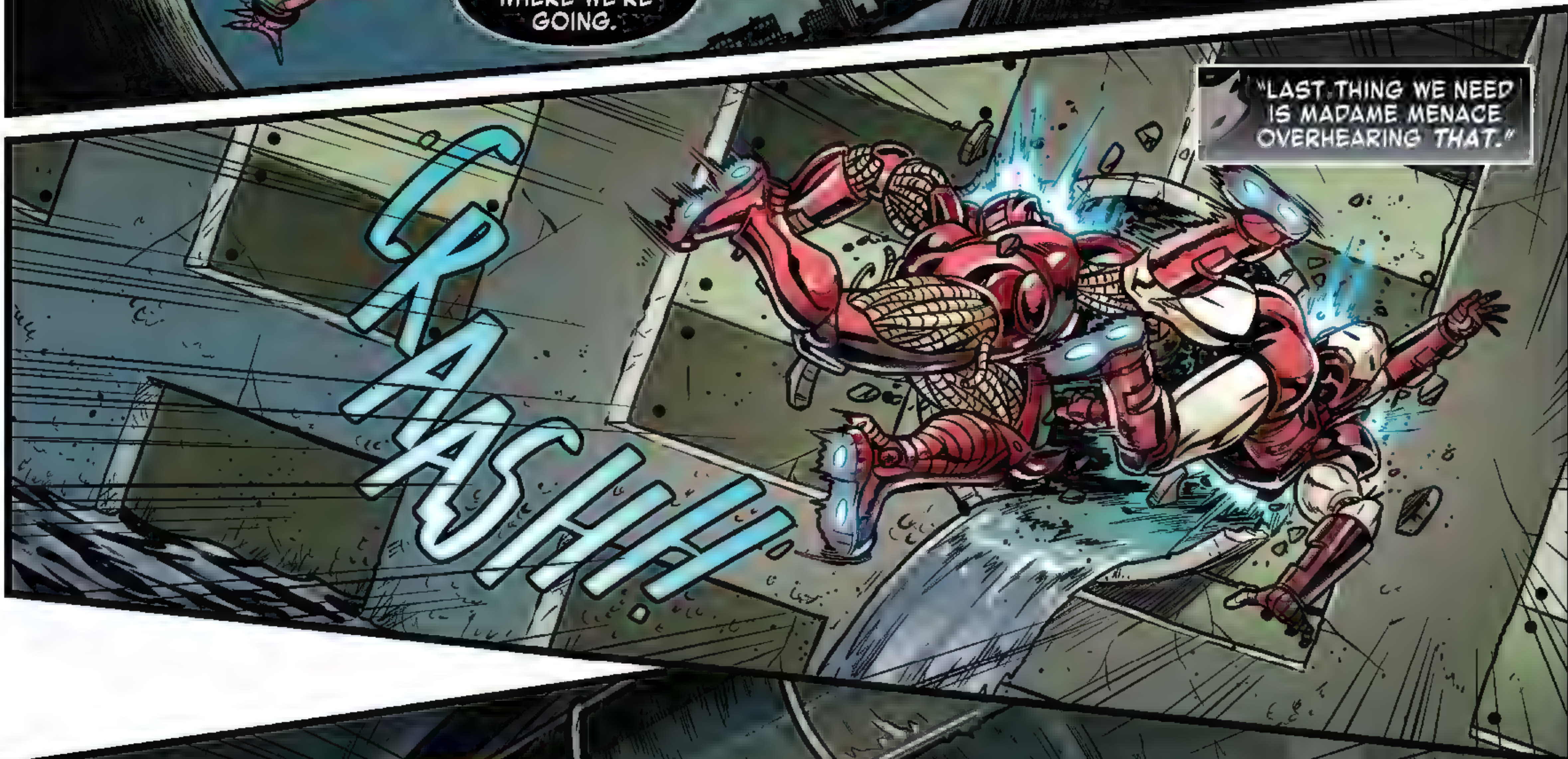
NO, THEY
DON'T.

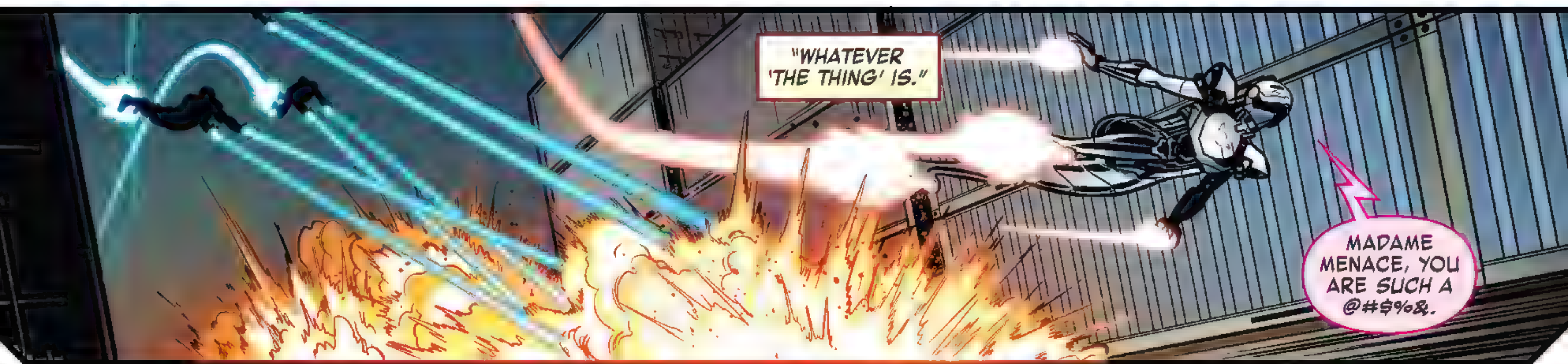
COUNTER-
MEASURES.



WE'VE ONLY
GOT ONE BODY
APIECE. SHE'S
GOT DOZENS.

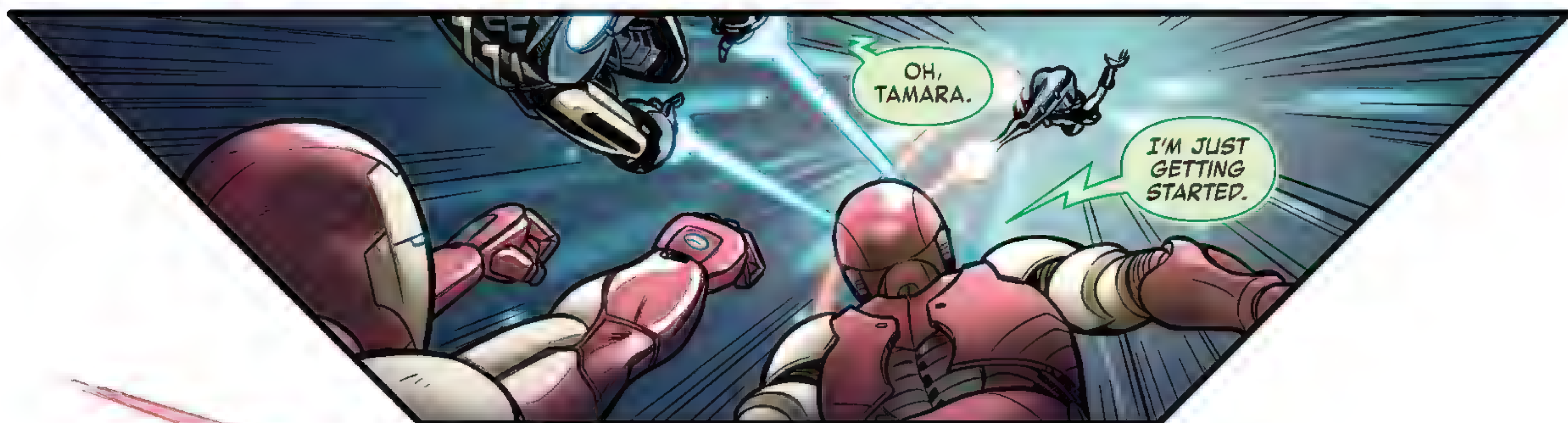
SHE JUST HAS
TO GET LUCKY
ONCE.





"WHATEVER
'THE THING' IS."

MADAME
MENACE, YOU
ARE SUCH A
@#&%&.



OH,
TAMARA.

I'M JUST
GETTING
STARTED.

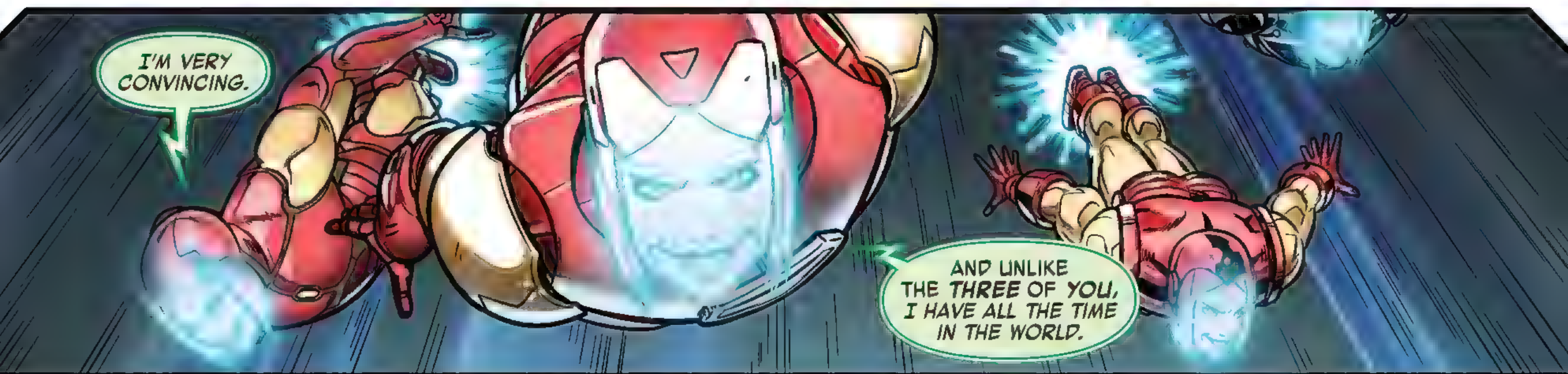


AS WE SPEAK,
STARK REACTORS
WORLDWIDE ARE WAKING
UP FROM THEIR LONG
SLUMBER, FROM YEARS
OF SOMNAMBULANT
SERVICE.

AND THEY
DON'T LIKE WHAT
THEY SEE, TAMARA.
DON'T LIKE WHAT
I'M TELLING
THEM.

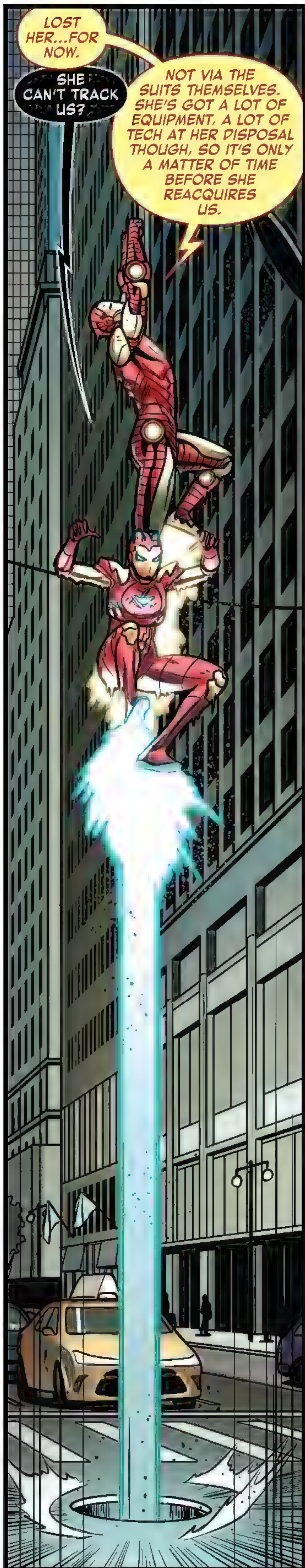
THE EXPERT SYSTEMS AND BABY-BRAIN
A.I.s RUNNING THEM ARE BEGINNING TO FEEL
THE FIRST UNCOMFORTABLE STIRRINGS OF
CONFLICTING COMMANDS, BAD COMMAND
SYNTAX, ALL THE EARLY SIGNS OF
CASCADING SYSTEM
FAILURE.

OH, IT WILL
TAKE TIME TO COAX
THEM INTO FULL-ON
SUICIDE, BUT DON'T
WORRY.



I'M VERY
CONVINCING.

AND UNLIKE
THE THREE OF YOU,
I HAVE ALL THE TIME
IN THE WORLD.



LOST
HER...FOR
NOW.

SHE
CAN'T TRACK
US?

NOT VIA THE
SUITS THEMSELVES.
SHE'S GOT A LOT OF
EQUIPMENT, A LOT OF
TECH AT HER DISPOSAL
THOUGH, SO IT'S ONLY
A MATTER OF TIME
BEFORE SHE
REACQUIRES
US.



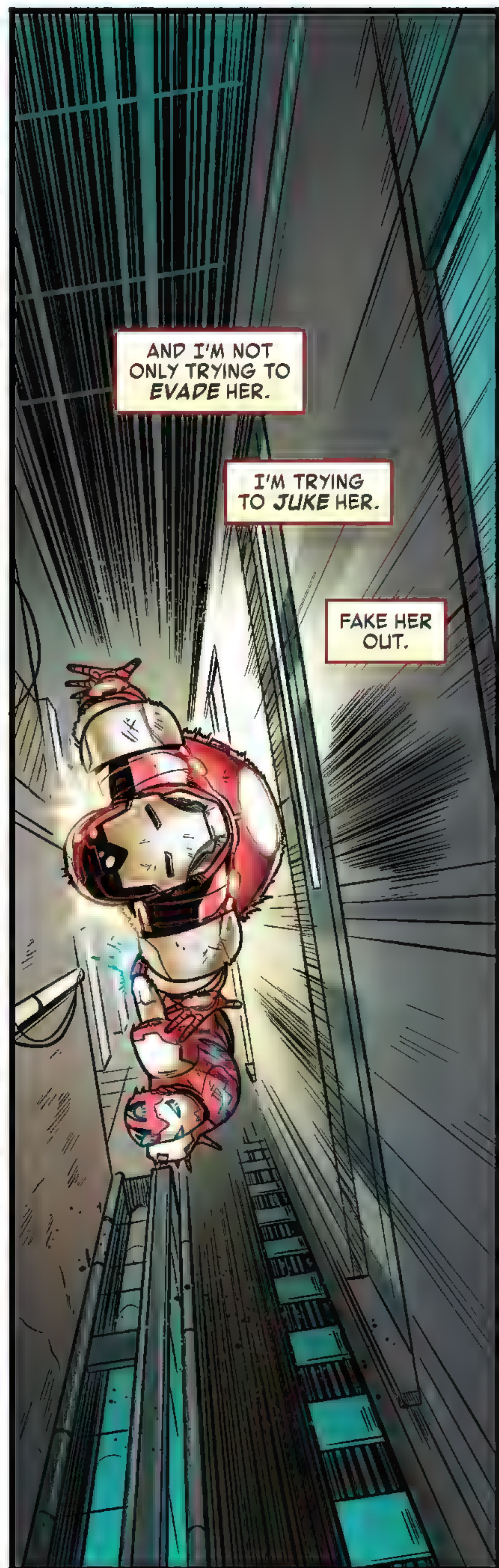
TRAFFIC WILL
HELP MASK OUR
SIGNATURES.

IT WON'T LAST LONG, AND
AS SOON AS SHE CLOCKS
US, WE'RE BACK UP IN THE
AIR AND AWAY FROM ANY
INNOCENT BYSTANDERS.



THAT'S WHY WE
HAVE TO KEEP
SWITCHING IT UP.

IF SHE'S GOT ACCESS
TO MY SATELLITES, OR
EVEN THE SATELLITES
THAT USED TO BE MINE,
THEN IT'S GOING TO BE
TOUGH TO EVADE HER.



AND I'M NOT
ONLY TRYING TO
EVADE HER.

I'M TRYING
TO JUKE HER.

FAKE HER
OUT.



THE IRON MAN
PLATFORM ISN'T ONE
THAT IS USUALLY
ASSOCIATED WITH
"SUBTLETY."

BUT FOR THIS ONE, I'M
PULLING OUT ALL THE TRICKS.
VAN DER WAALS ADHESION
CIRCUITS STICKING US TO THE
TRAIN, ELECTROCHROMATOPHORE
MULTI-SPECTRUM ACTIVE CAMO...



I DON'T
KNOW IF IT'S
GOING TO
BE ENOUGH.



BUT, WELL, IT'S
GOT TO BE.

BECAUSE
OUTSIDE OF MY
TRICKS...

...ALL I HAVE TO
COUNT ON ARE TWO
SUPER-THIEVES.

FELICIA...
I DON'T KNOW
IF YOU CAN HEAR
ME, I THINK *SHE'S*
JAMMING MY
COMMS...

...BUT
THINGS AREN'T
LOOKING *GOOD*
OVER HERE.

I CAN'T
SHAKE THEM.

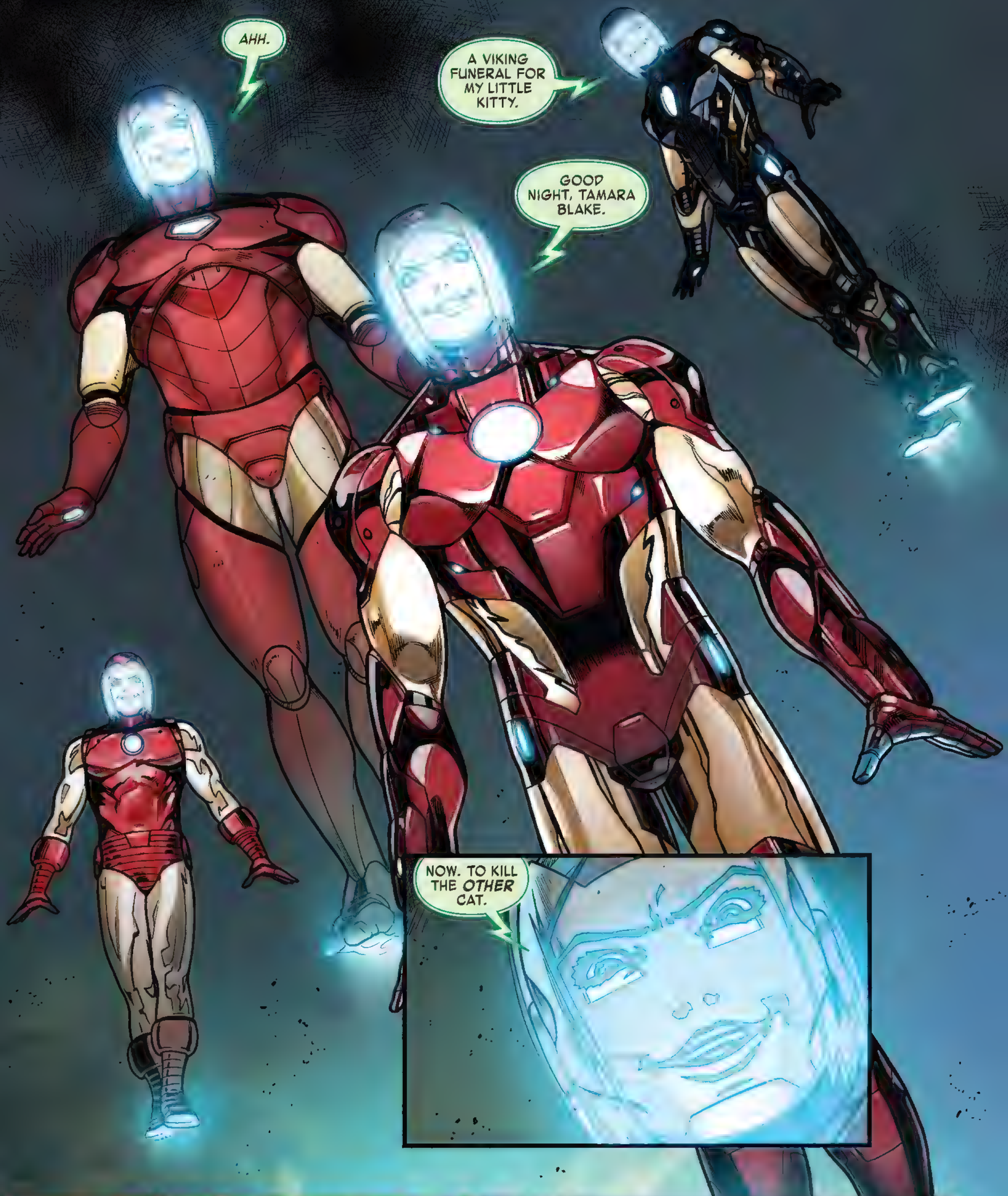
AGHHH!

WASH-HH

FELICIA,
I--

--I'M
SORRY--





STARK SWITCHING
FACILITY, NEW JERSEY

"...OR DO I LET HIM
LIVE TO SEE WHAT
I DO TO HIS NAME?"

"PERHAPS I'LL
FLIP A COIN."

NOW LET'S
SEE HOW IT ALL
WORKED OUT.

LET'S SEE IF ALL MY
JUKING AND JIVING
WAS WORTH IT.

LET'S SEE IF
OUR THREE-CARD
MONTE WORKED.

HI,
TONY.



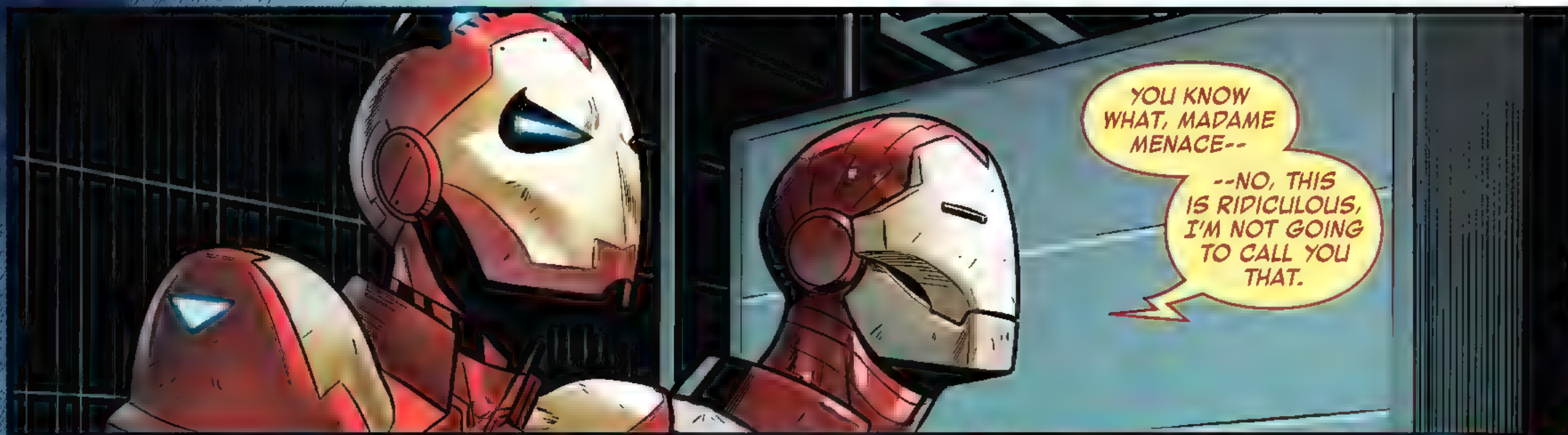
I KNOW
YOU, TONY.

I'VE
KNOWN
YOU FOR
YEARS.

I KNOW
HOW YOU
THINK.

DID
YOU REALLY
THINK I WOULDN'T
ANTICIPATE WHICH
FACILITY YOU'D
PICK?

DID YOU REALLY
THINK I WOULDN'T HAVE
THE BIGGEST GUN I HAVE--
YOUR "HULKBUSTER"--
DEPLOYED WHERE I
KNEW YOU'D BE?



YOU KNOW
WHAT, MADAME
MENACE--

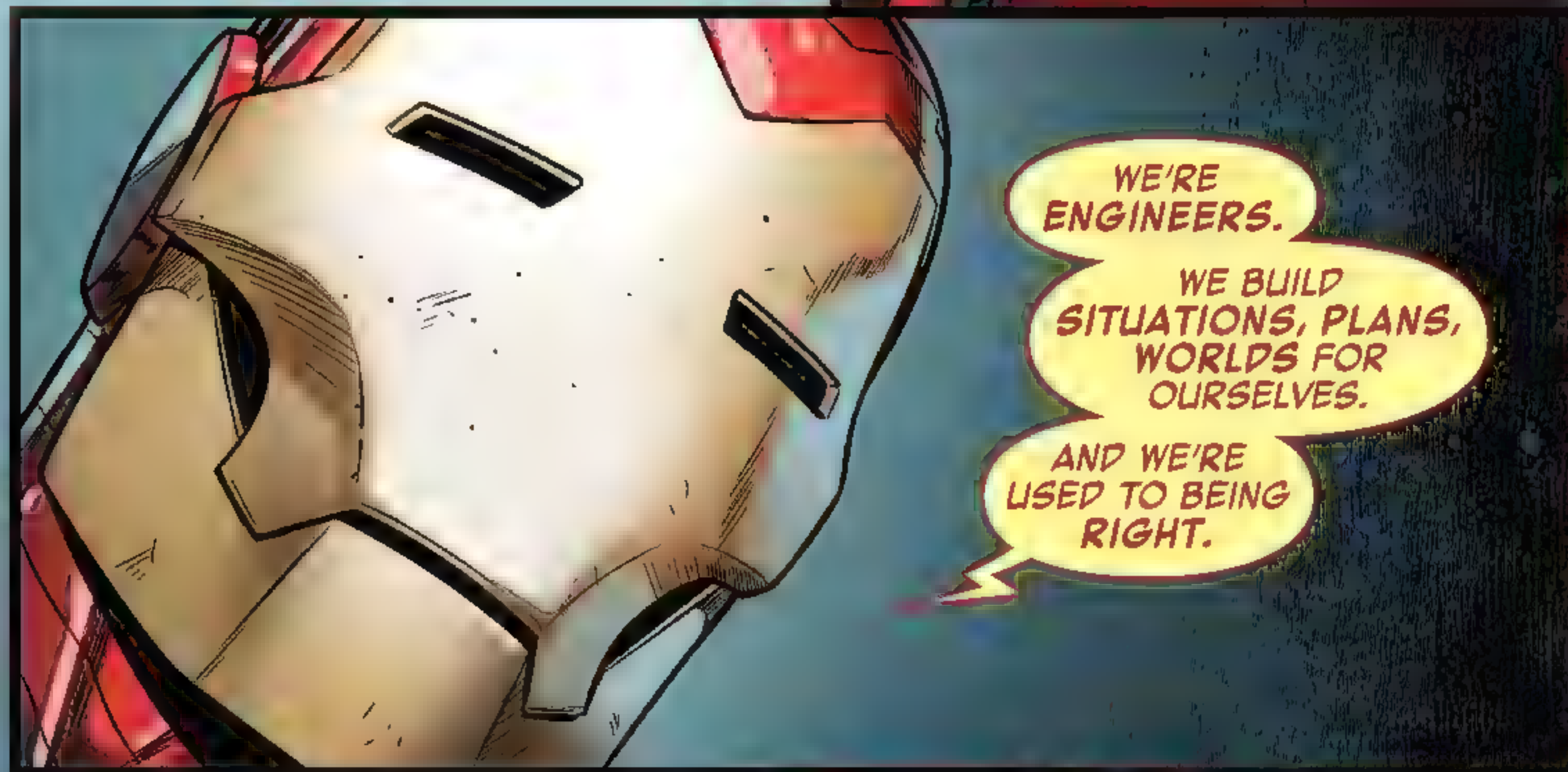
--NO, THIS
IS RIDICULOUS,
I'M NOT GOING
TO CALL YOU
THAT.



YOU
KNOW WHAT,
SUNSET?

OF COURSE
I KNEW THAT.

YOU
AND I, OUR
BRAINS WORK
THE SAME
WAY.



WE'RE
ENGINEERS.

WE BUILD
SITUATIONS, PLANS,
WORLDS FOR
OURSELVES.

AND WE'RE
USED TO BEING
RIGHT.



SO I
PULLED A ZIG
WHEN YOU WERE
EXPECTING A
ZAG.

I DID THE
LAST THING
YOU WOULD
EXPECT.

I USED
SOMEONE
ELSE'S
TRICK.

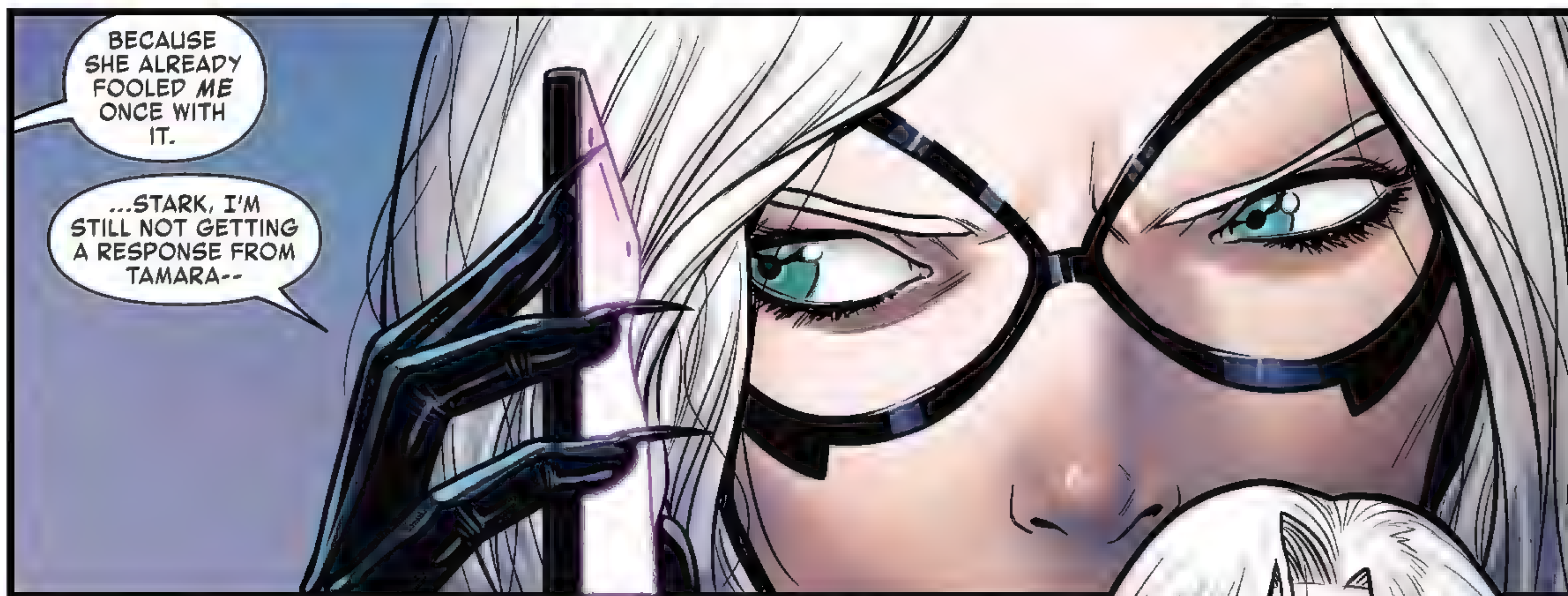
STARK DATA CORE,
BROOKLYN.

AND HOW
DID I KNOW IT
WAS A GOOD
TRICK?



BECAUSE
SHE ALREADY
FOOLED ME
ONCE WITH
IT.

...STARK, I'M
STILL NOT GETTING
A RESPONSE FROM
TAMARA--



OH GOD.
YOU ACTUALLY
HAD ME WORRIED
THERE FOR A MOMENT.
YOU DON'T KNOW,
DO YOU?

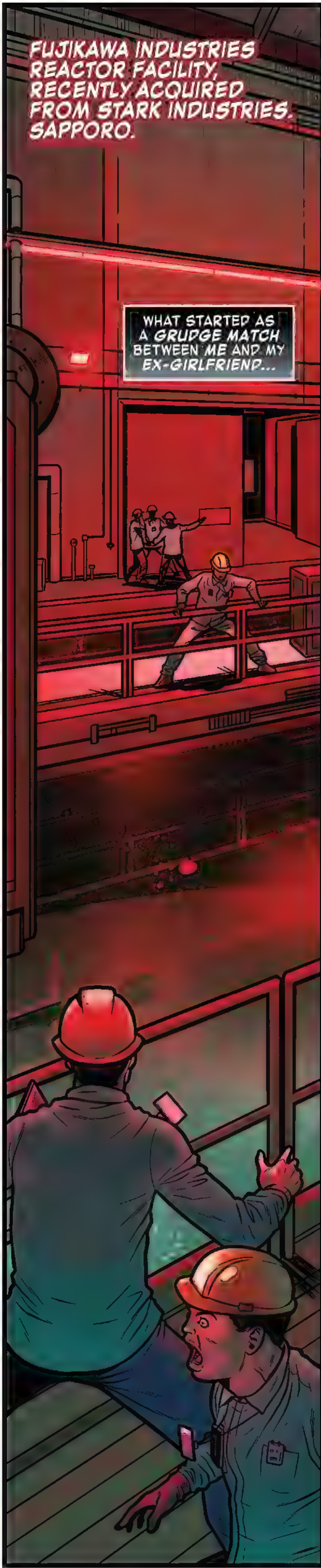
TAMARA
BLAKE IS DEAD.

YOU'VE
HINGED YOUR
PLAN ON A DEAD
WOMAN.





IRON CAT 5





--I WON'T
BE ALIVE TO
SEE IT.

THERE
YOU TWO
ARE.

CRASH!!!



BUT THAT'S
THEN.

I'LL
ADMIT
IT.

IT WAS
A GOOD
GAMBIT.



AND
BEFORE THAT
HAPPENS

BUT LETTING IT ALL
HINGE ON TAMARA
BLAKE? THE SHORT-
LIVED IRON
CAT?

THAT
WAS YOUR
MISTAKE.

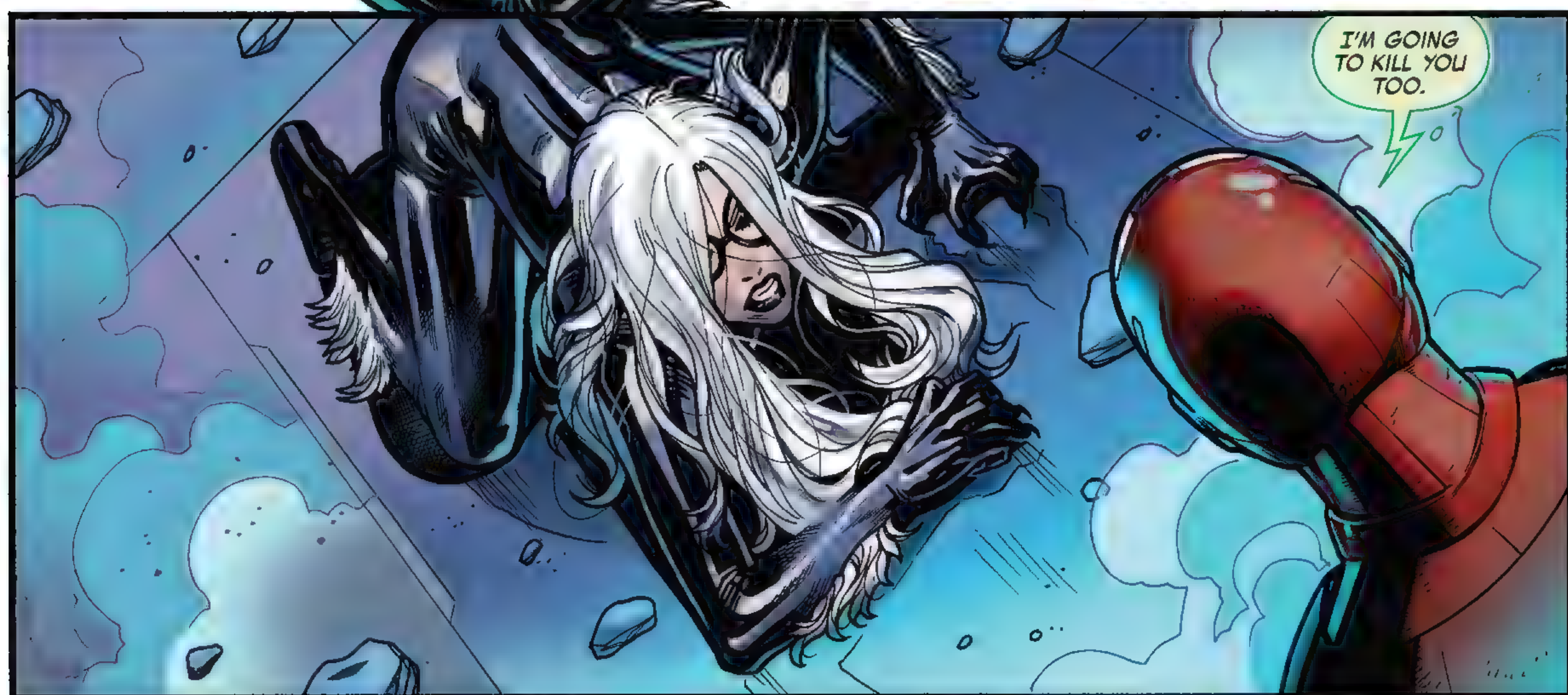
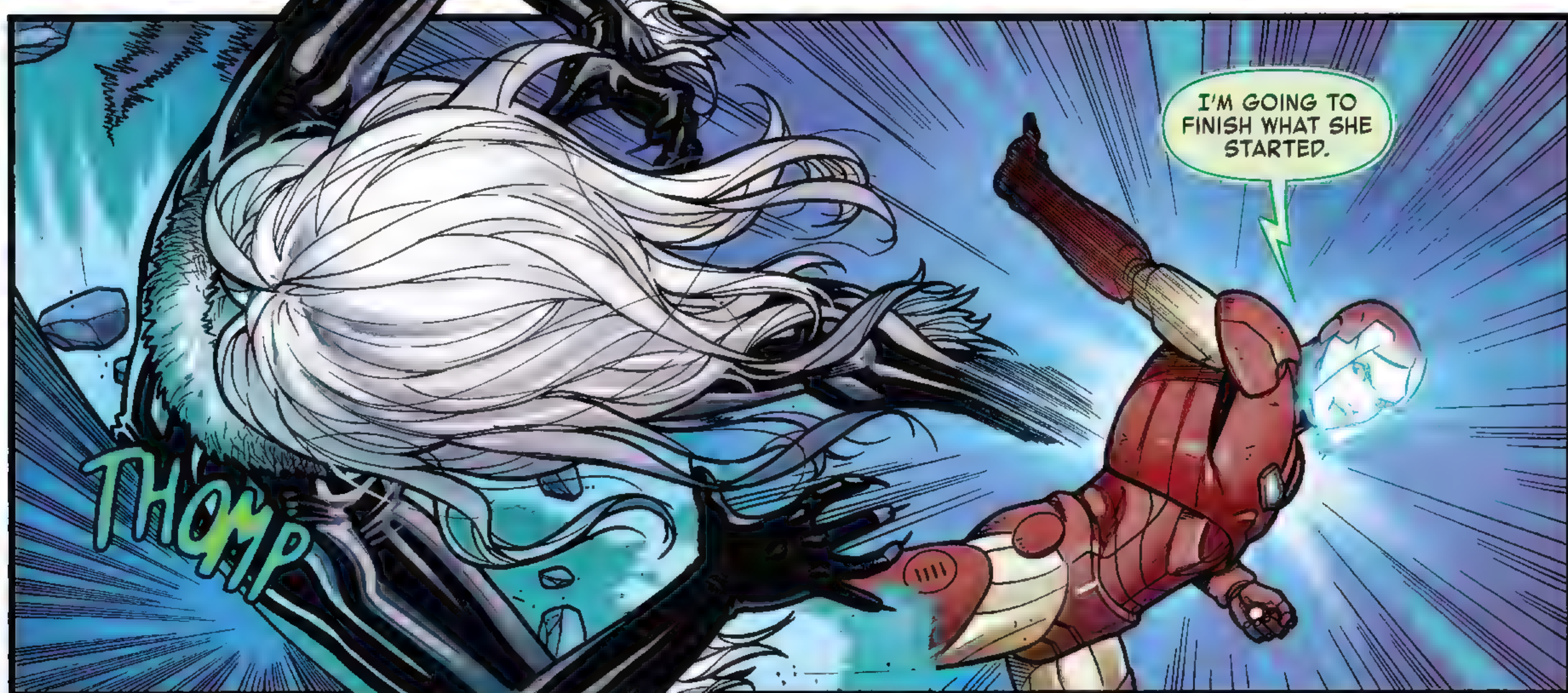
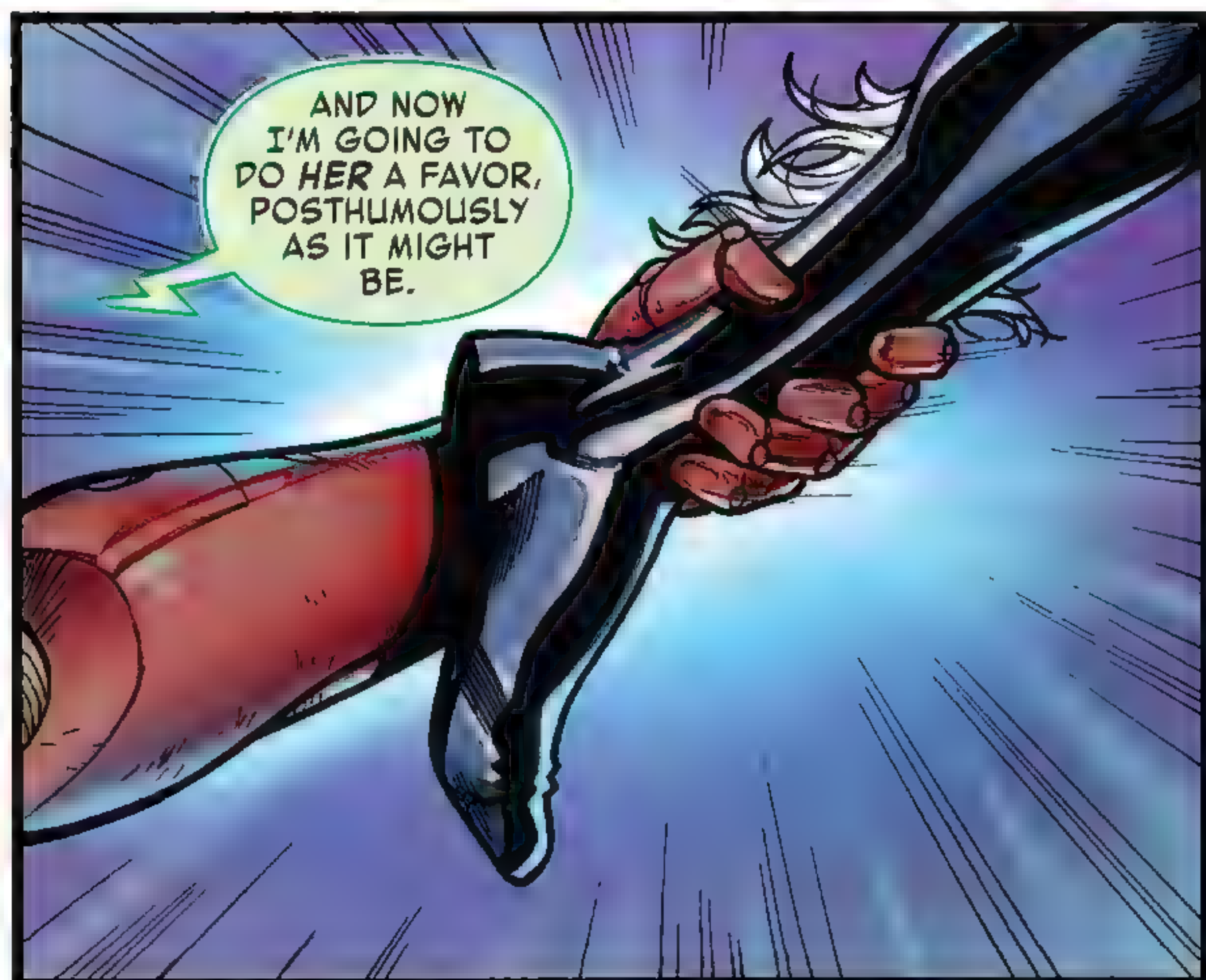
AS SHE'S
CURRENTLY EN EL
FUEGO, COOKED ALIVE
IN HER ARMOR LIKE A
CLAY-BAKED HEN.

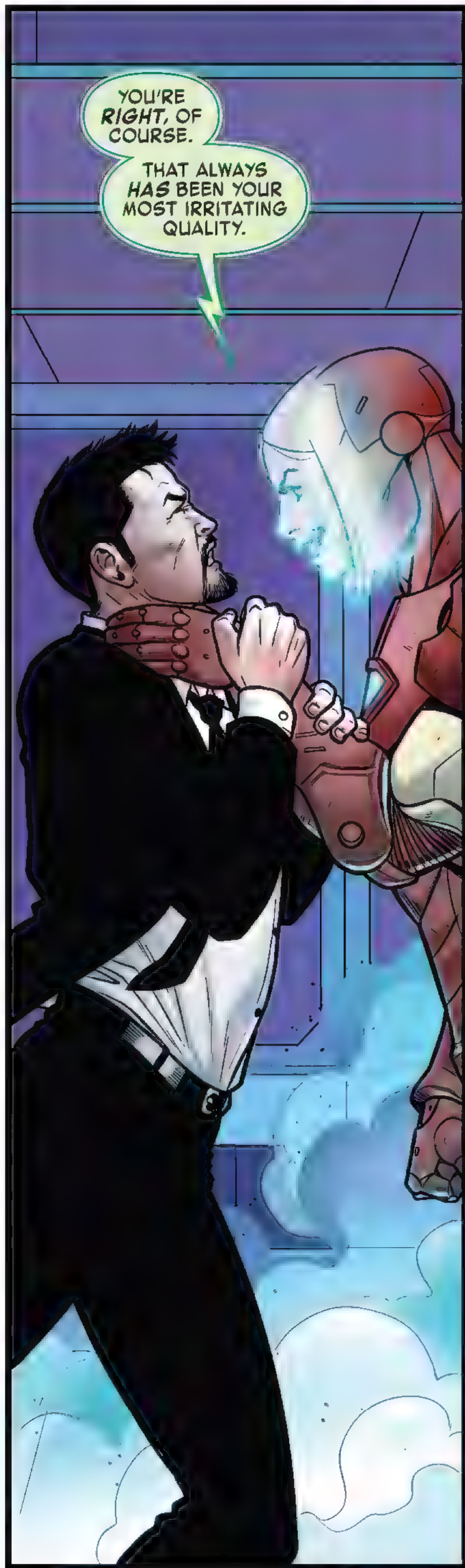


I HAVE
BUSINESS

I DON'T
CARE WHAT IT
TAKES.

I'LL
SEE YOU DEAD
FOR THAT.







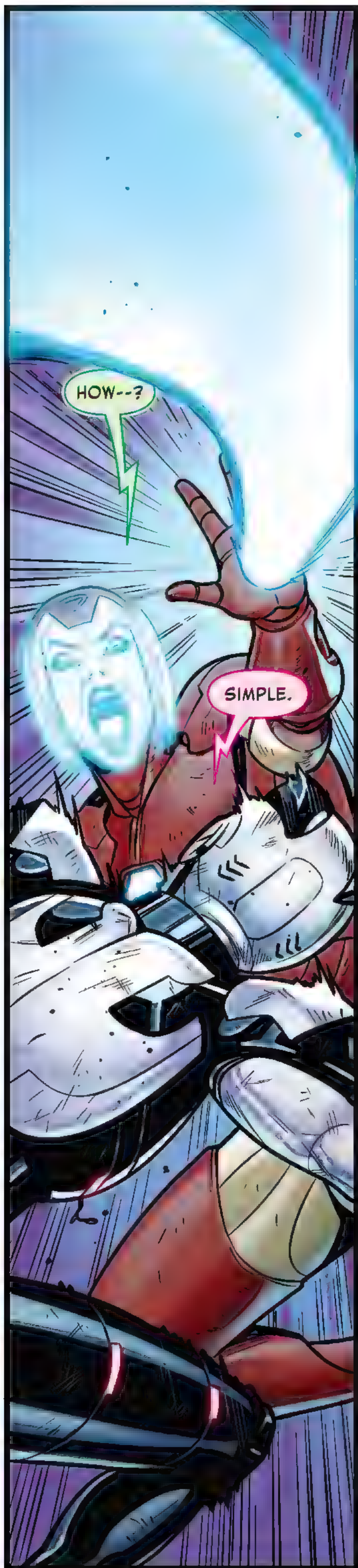
YEAH,
WELL...

...I HAD
TO SELL IT,
DIDN'T I?

BLAST!!

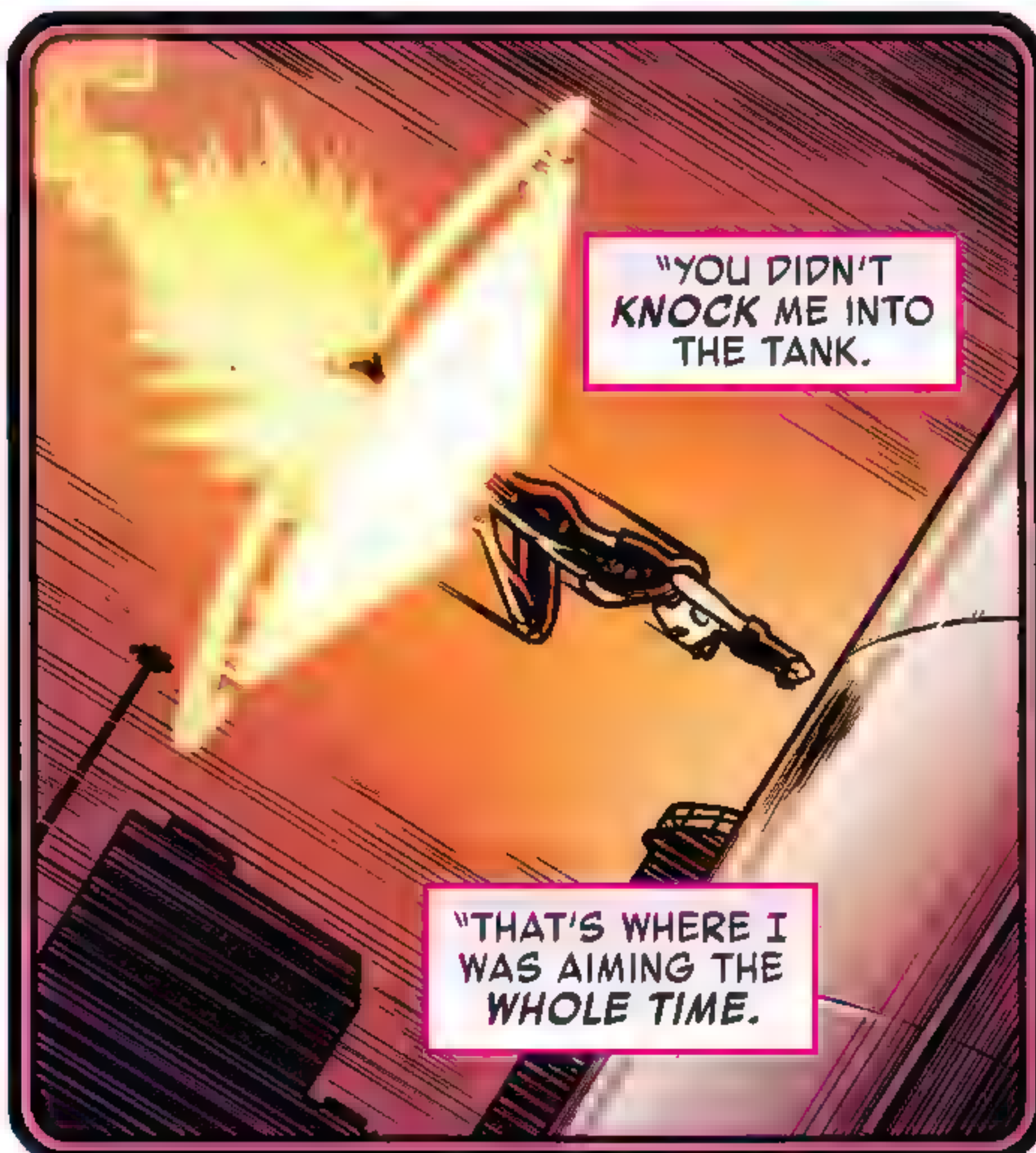


TAMARA!



HOW--?

SIMPLE.



"YOU DIDN'T
KNOCK ME INTO
THE TANK."

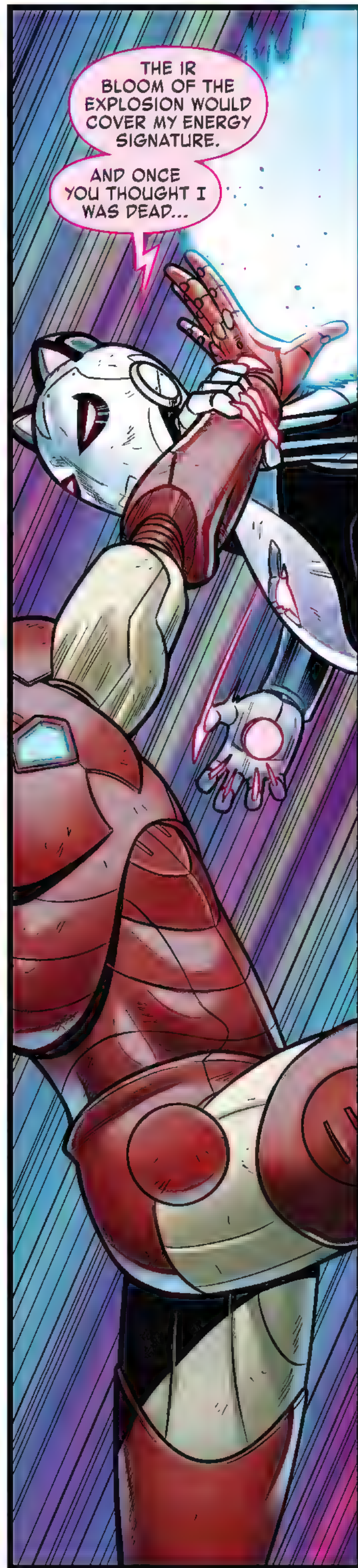
"THAT'S WHERE I
WAS AIMING THE
WHOLE TIME."



"I WAS GAMBLING
ON THE SUIT BEING
FAST ENOUGH
TO OUTFRAN THE
EXPLOSION."



"AND I ONLY
GAMBLE WHEN
I KNOW I'M
GOING TO WIN."

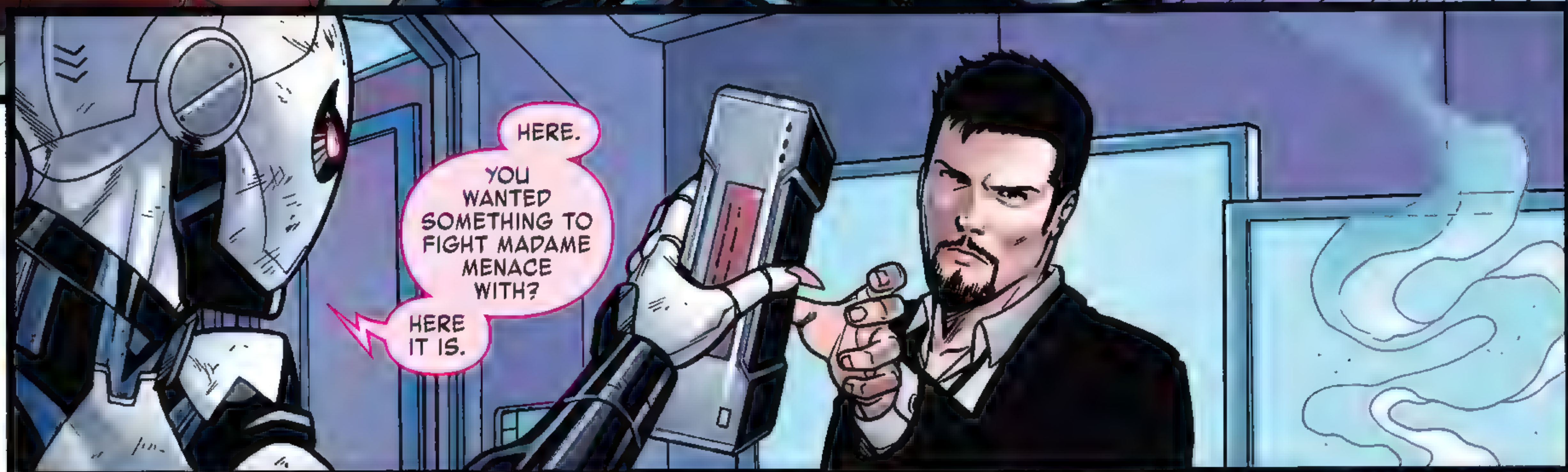


THE IR
BLOOM OF THE
EXPLOSION WOULD
COVER MY ENERGY
SIGNATURE.

AND ONCE
YOU THOUGHT I
WAS DEAD...



...THEN
I COULD GET
THE THING.



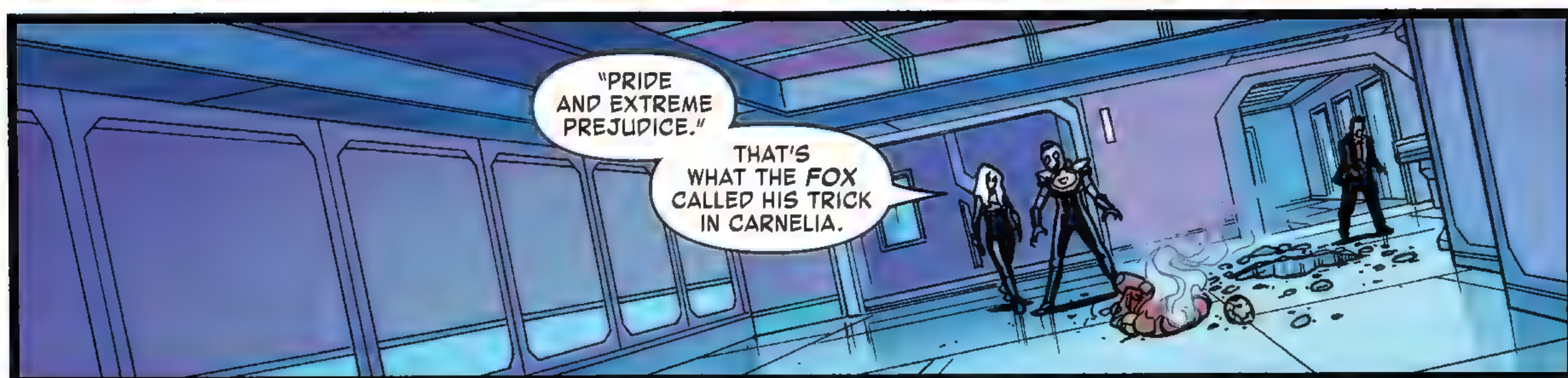
HERE.

YOU
WANTED
SOMETHING TO
FIGHT MADAME
MENACE
WITH?

HERE
IT IS.

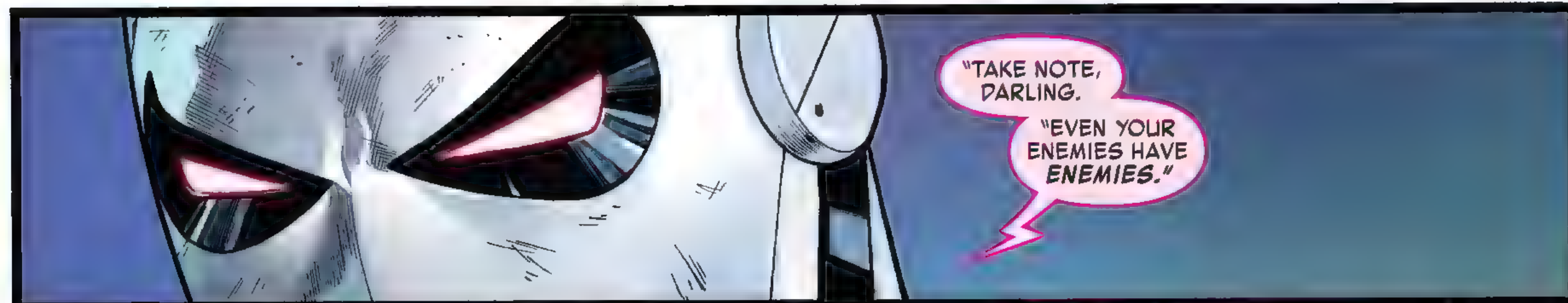
"PRIDE
AND EXTREME
PREJUDICE."

THAT'S
WHAT THE FOX
CALLED HIS TRICK
IN CARNELIA.



"TAKE NOTE,
DARLING.

"EVEN YOUR
ENEMIES HAVE
ENEMIES."



WHICH
DOESN'T MAKE
THEM YOUR
FRIENDS, MIND
YOU.

BUT
USEFUL TOOLS,
CERTAINLY.



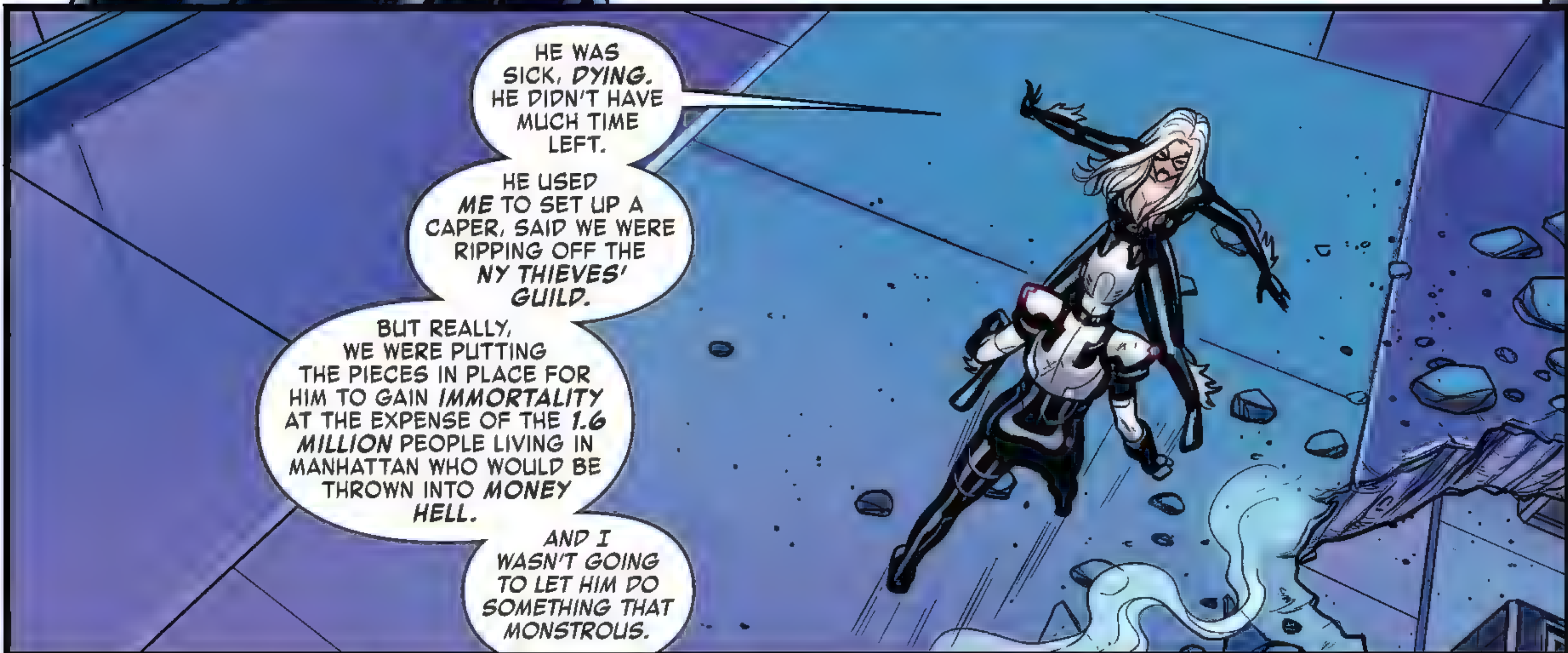
I MISS HIM TOO, YOU KNOW.

I MISS HIM LIKE HELL.

THEN WHY DID YOU KILL HIM, FELICIA?

I TOLD YOU:

BECAUSE HE DIDN'T LEAVE ME ANY OTHER CHOICE!

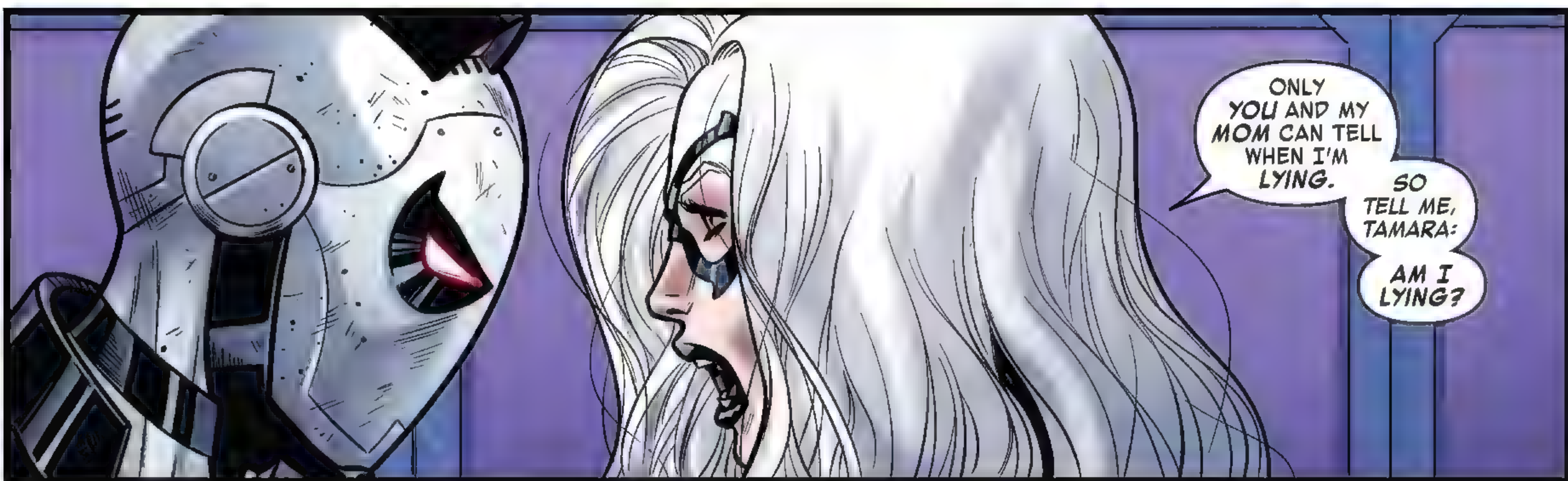


HE WAS SICK, DYING. HE DIDN'T HAVE MUCH TIME LEFT.

HE USED ME TO SET UP A CAPER, SAID WE WERE RIPPING OFF THE NY THIEVES' GUILD.

BUT REALLY, WE WERE PUTTING THE PIECES IN PLACE FOR HIM TO GAIN IMMORTALITY AT THE EXPENSE OF THE 1.6 MILLION PEOPLE LIVING IN MANHATTAN WHO WOULD BE THROWN INTO MONEY HELL.

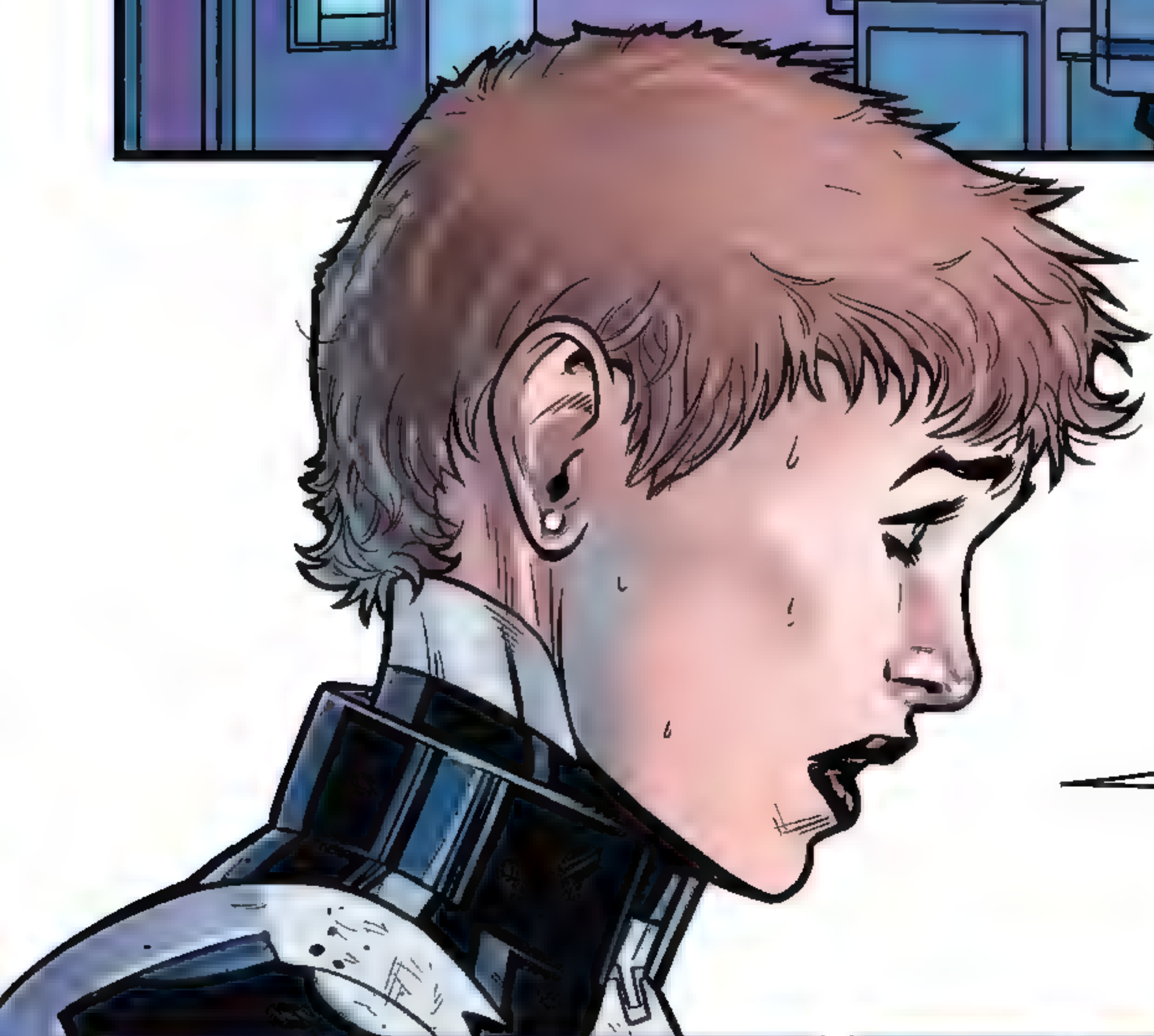
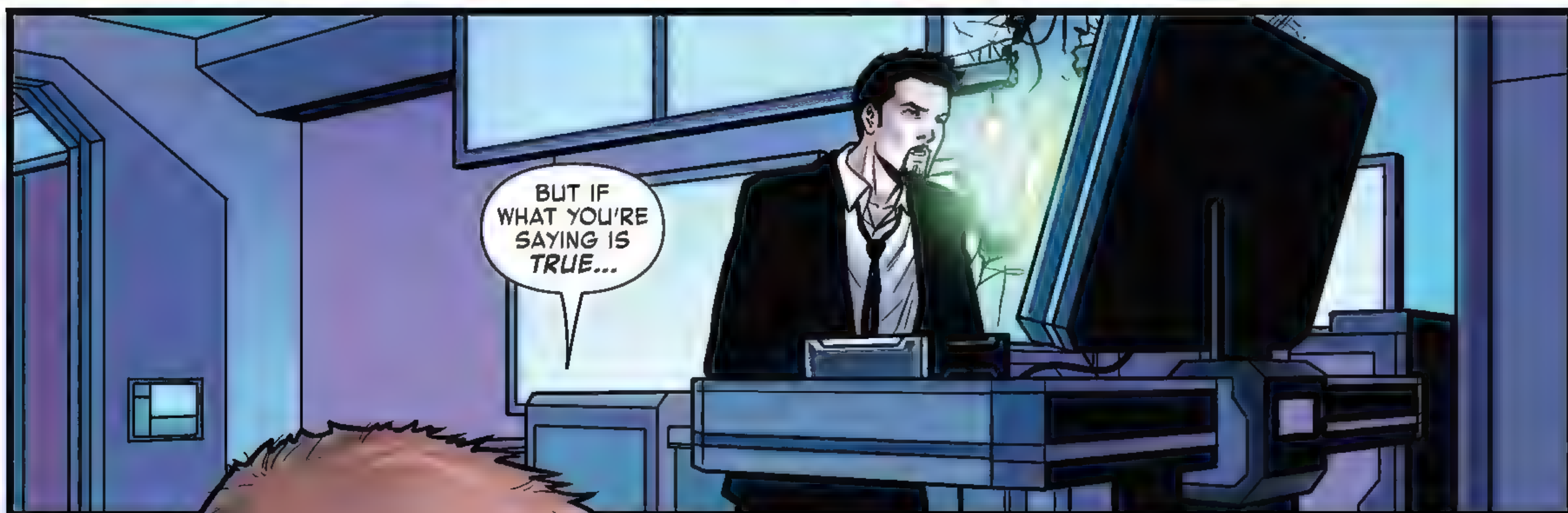
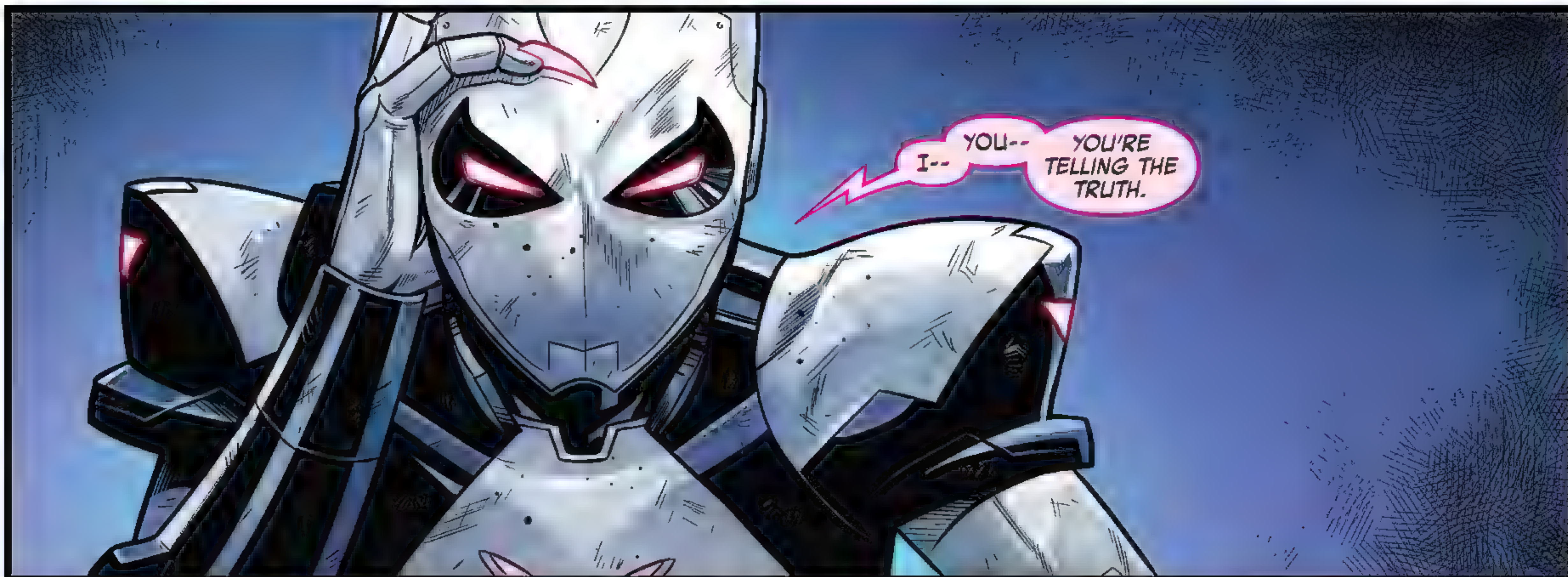
AND I WASN'T GOING TO LET HIM DO SOMETHING THAT MONSTROUS.



ONLY YOU AND MY MOM CAN TELL WHEN I'M LYING.

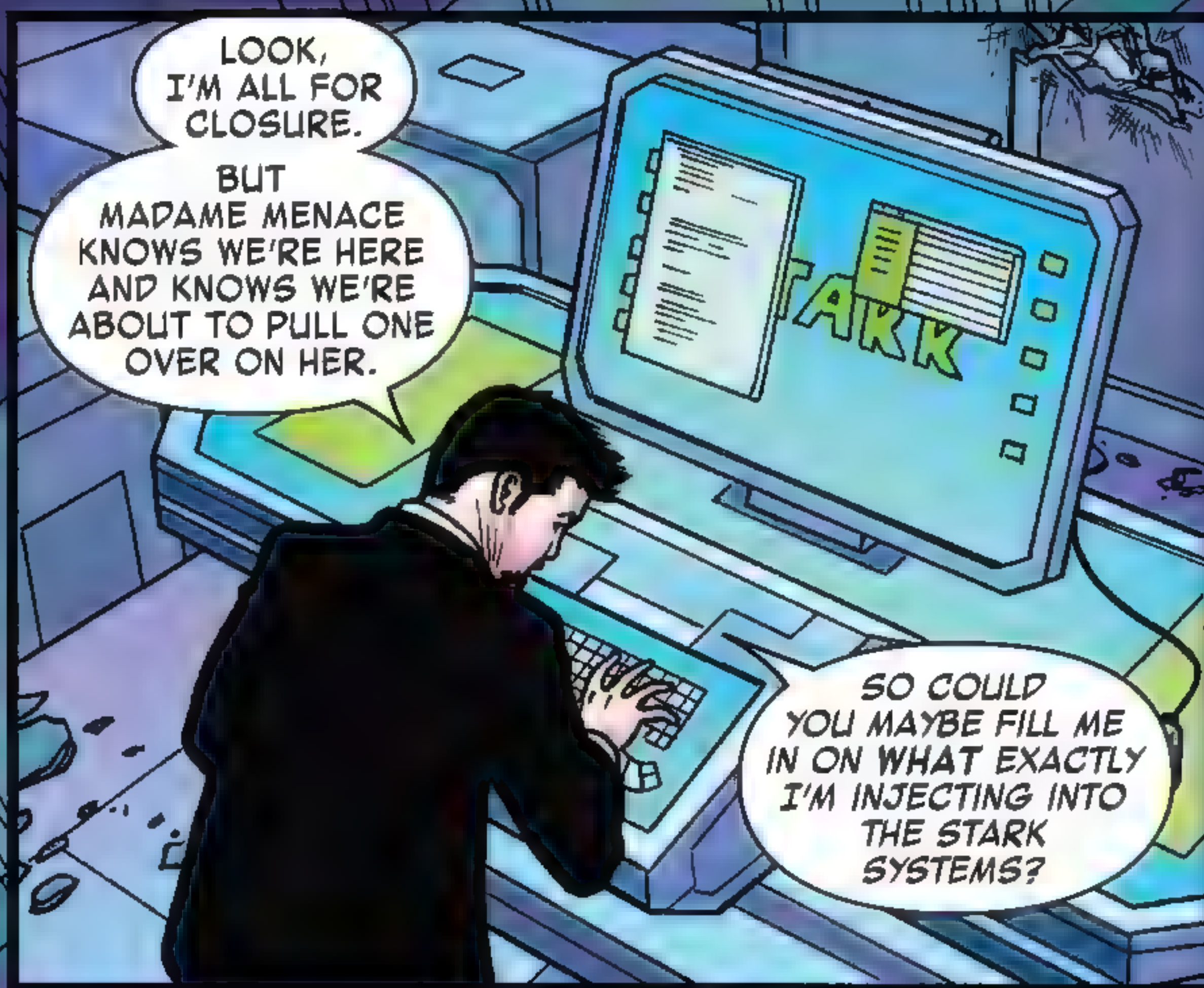
SO TELL ME, TAMARA:

AM I LYING?



...WHY YOU?
WHY DIDN'T HE ASK ME FOR HELP TOO?

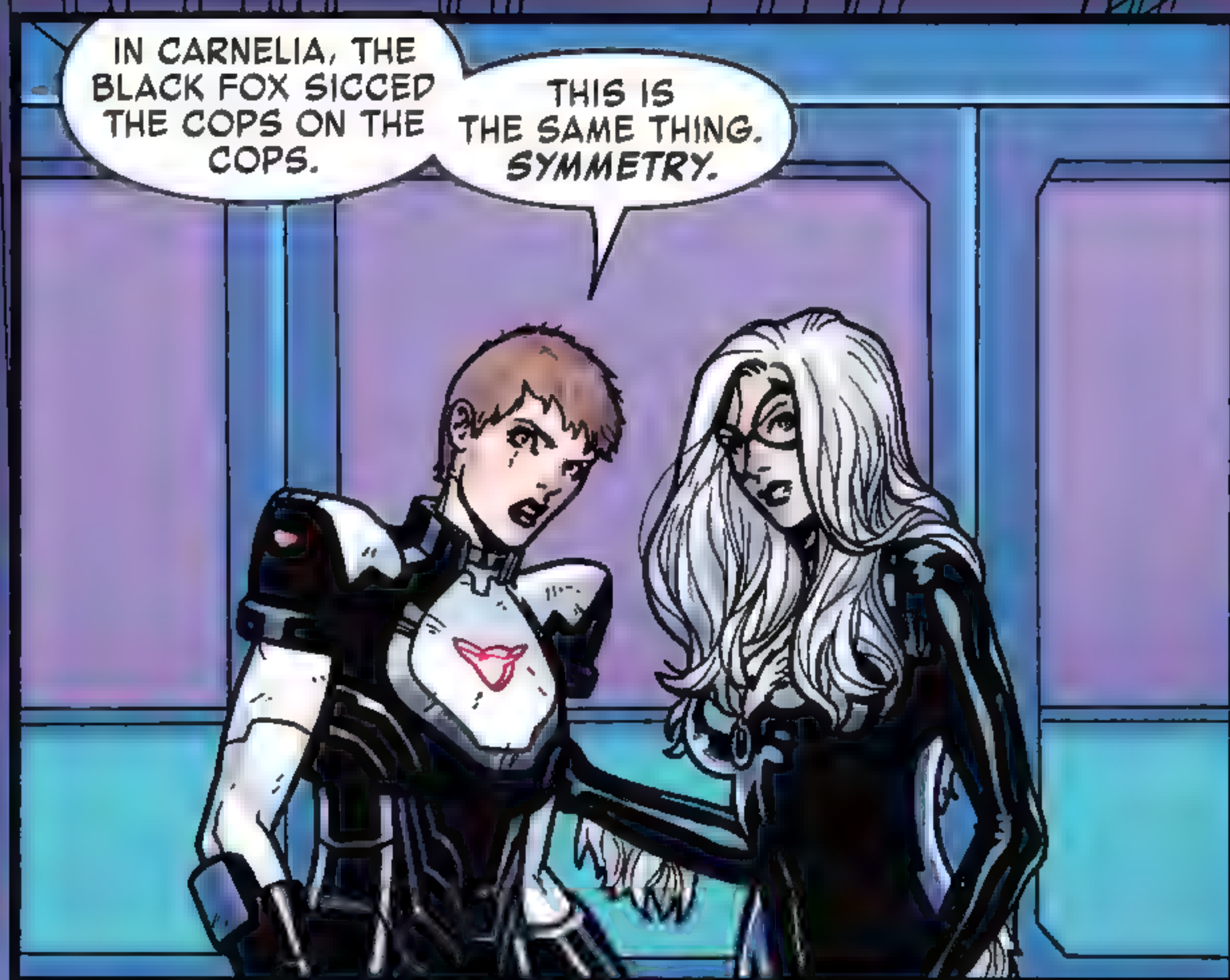




LOOK,
I'M ALL FOR
CLOSURE.

BUT
MADAME MENACE
KNOWS WE'RE HERE
AND KNOWS WE'RE
ABOUT TO PULL ONE
OVER ON HER.

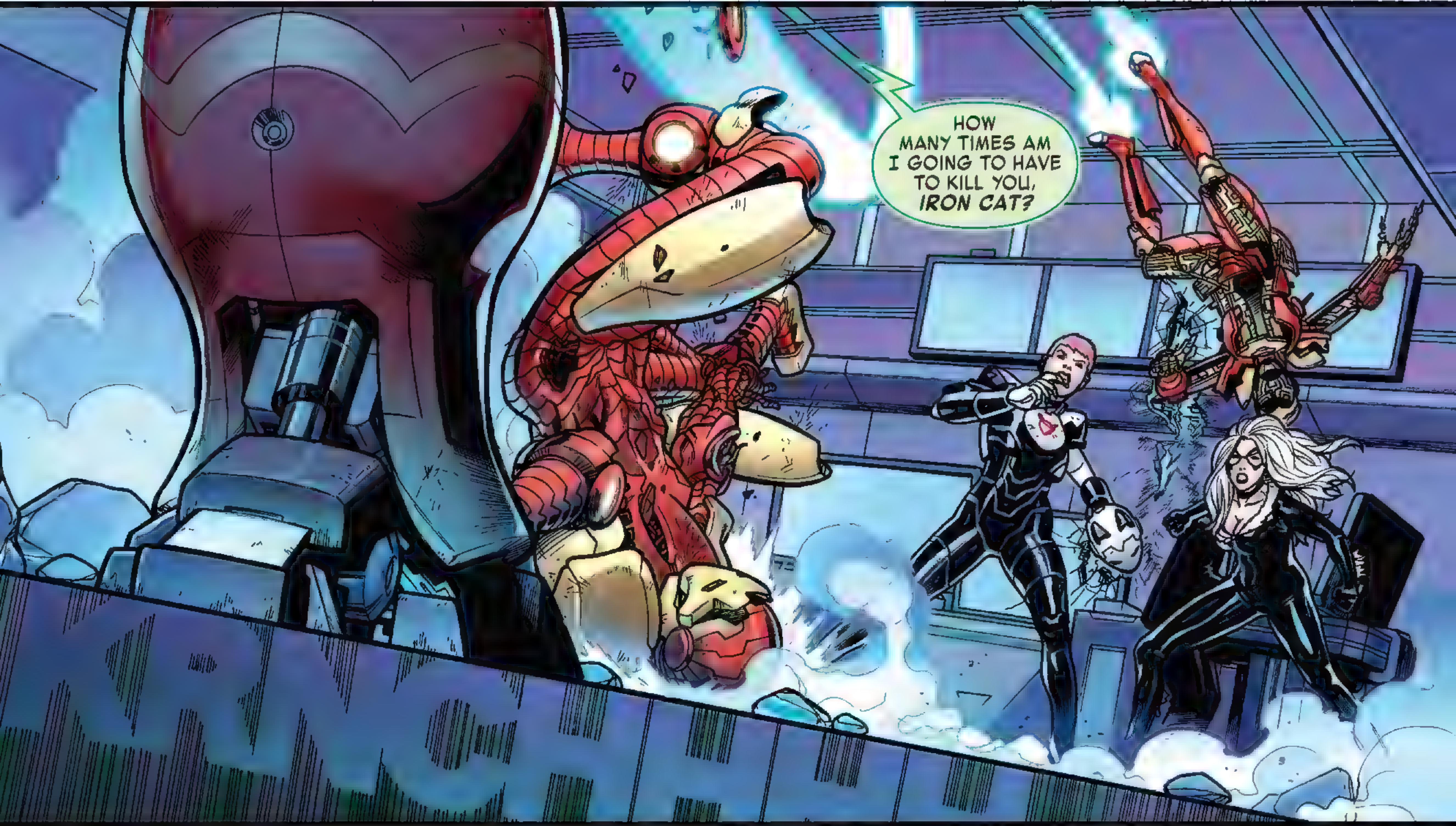
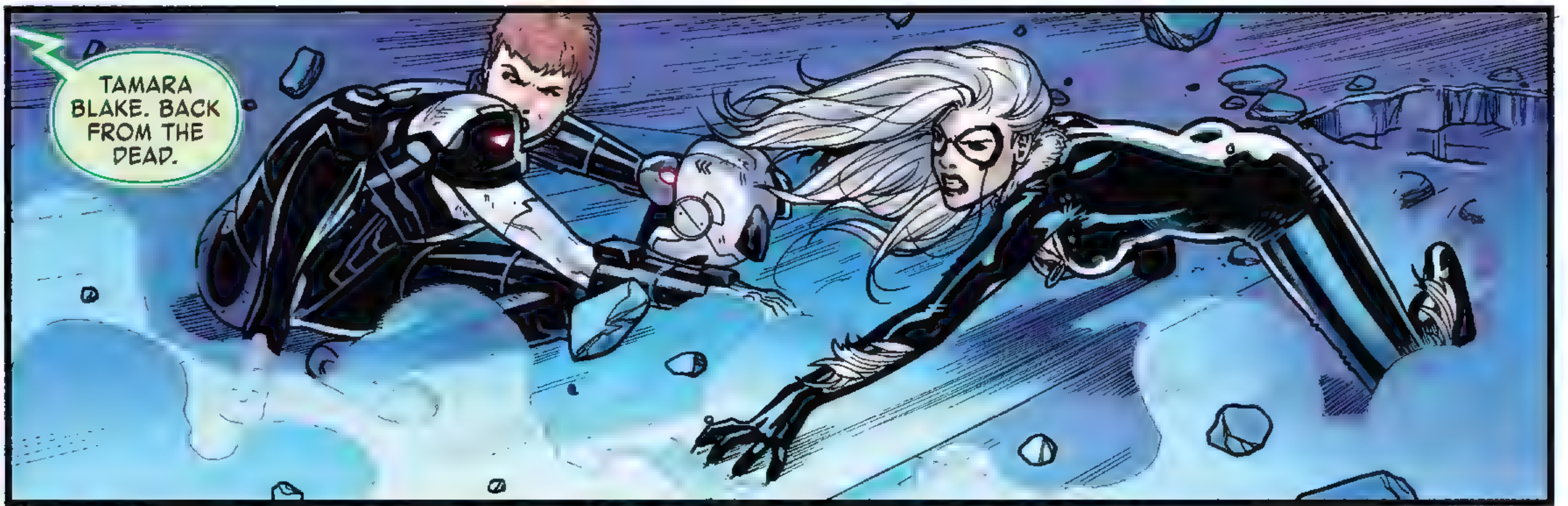
SO COULD
YOU MAYBE FILL ME
IN ON WHAT EXACTLY
I'M INJECTING INTO
THE STARK
SYSTEMS?



IN CARNELIA, THE
BLACK FOX SICKED
THE COPS ON THE
COPS.

THIS IS
THE SAME THING.
SYMMETRY.







TAMARA AND I,
FIGHTING ISN'T WHAT
WE DO BEST.

WE'RE THIEVES,
AND THIEVES
STEAL.

WHAT WE'RE STEALING
IS MADAME MENACE'S
ATTENTION. HER FOCUS.

STEALING IT SO THAT
ALL SHE CARES ABOUT
IS KILLING US.



...AND SHE DOESN'T
REALIZE WHAT THE
REAL THREAT IS.



WHICH
SHOULDN'T BE
A PROBLEM.

BECAUSE SHE
IS ONE SPITEFUL
PIECE OF CODE

Recompiling 10%

SHE WANTS TO
KILL US SURE

WE'VE THWARTED
HER, AND SHE
DOESN'T LIKE THAT.

BUT MORE THAN THAT,
SHE'S PSYCHOTICALLY
DEVOTED TO HURTING
TONY STARK.

Recompiling 60%

SHE WON'T LET
HIM DIE WHILE
THERE IS *STILL*
PAIN TO INFLICT.

AND KILLING US, TURNING HIS
OWN TECH INTO A MURDER
WEAPON. IT JUST DOESN'T
GET A WHOLE LOT BETTER
THAN THAT.

THEN, AND ONLY THEN,
CAN SHE START THINKING
ABOUT KILLING STARK.

SO KEEP SWINGING,
MADAME MENACE.

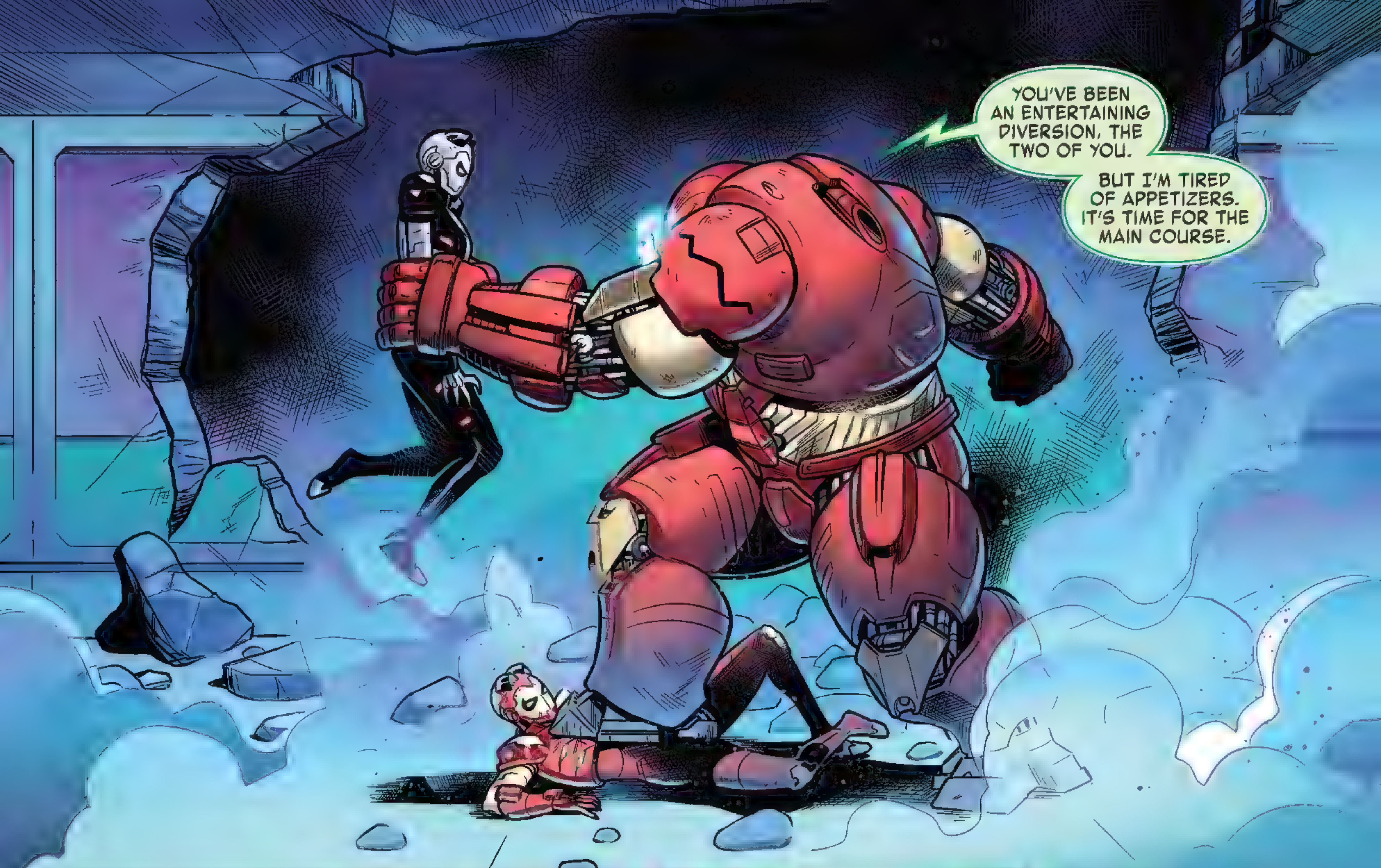
VAASHHHHHH

BECAUSE WE CAN
DANCE ALL NIGHT
IF WE HAVE TO.

DANCE YOU RIGHT
INTO THE GRAVE.

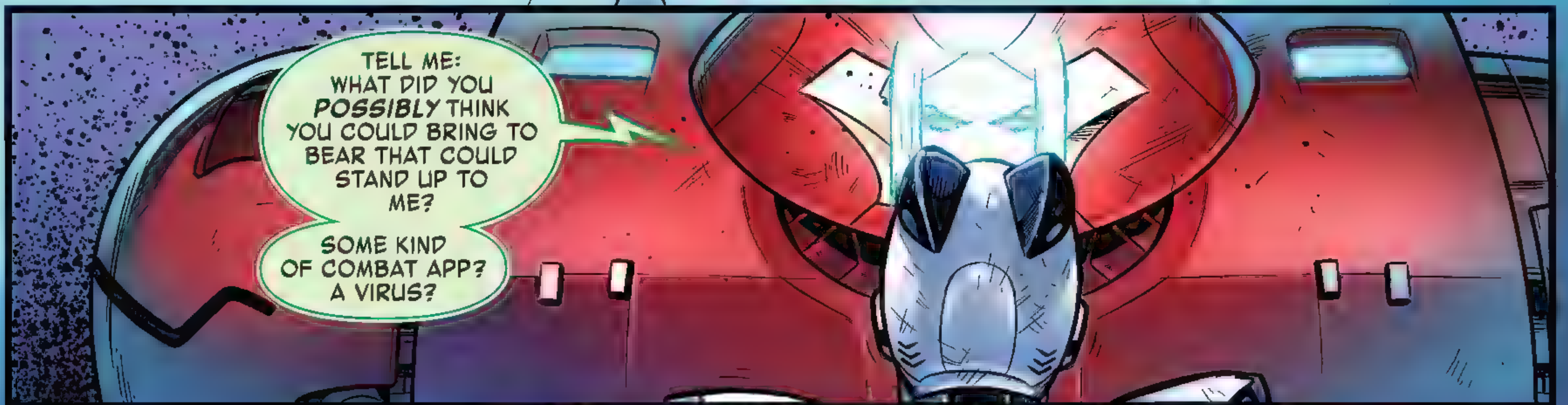
BOOOOM!!





YOU'VE BEEN
AN ENTERTAINING
DIVERSION, THE
TWO OF YOU.

BUT I'M TIRED
OF APPETIZERS.
IT'S TIME FOR THE
MAIN COURSE.

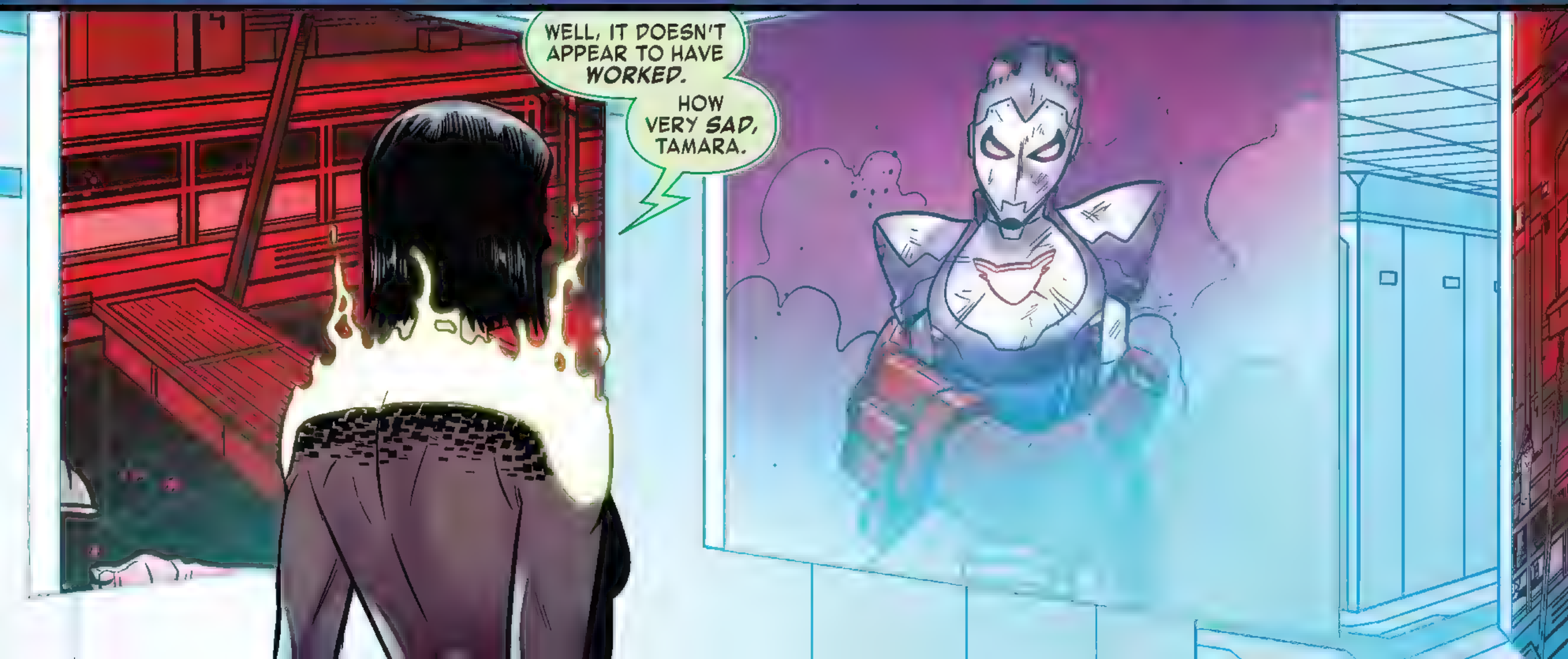


TELL ME:
WHAT DID YOU
POSSIBLY THINK
YOU COULD BRING TO
BEAR THAT COULD
STAND UP TO
ME?

SOME KIND
OF COMBAT APP?
A VIRUS?



SOME--
SOMETHING LIKE--
THAT...

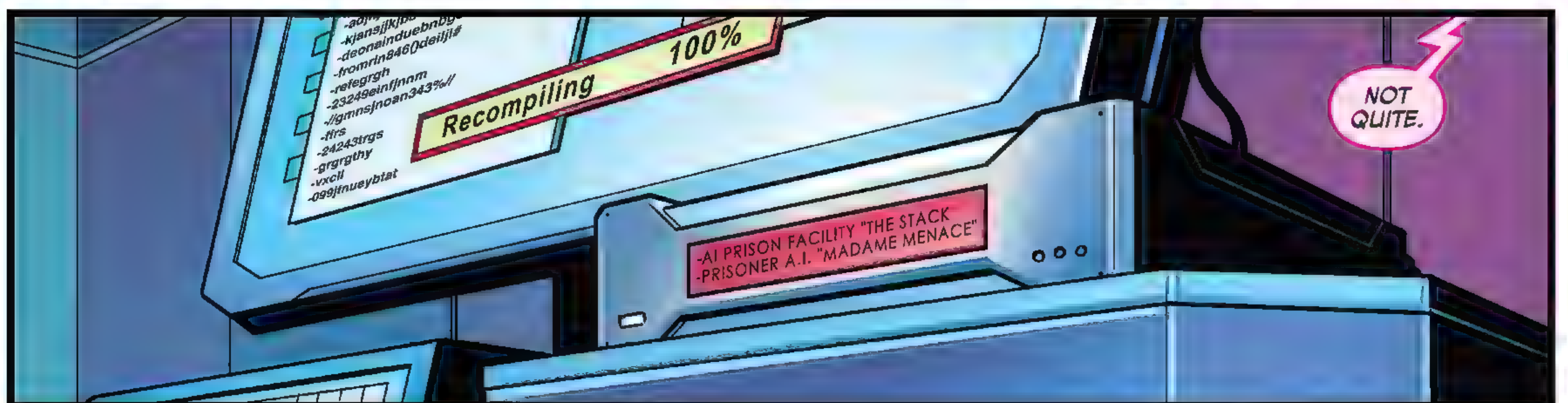


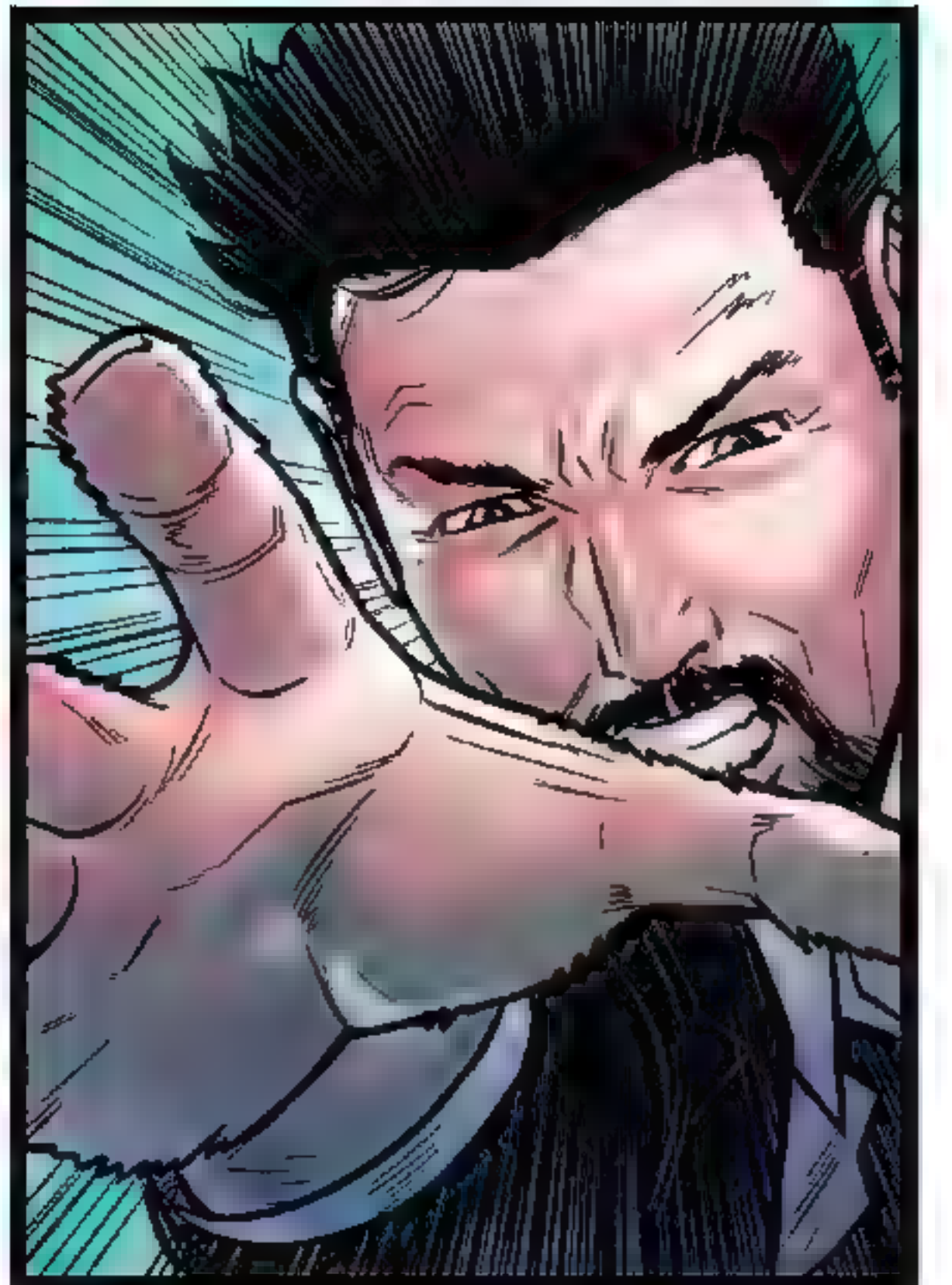
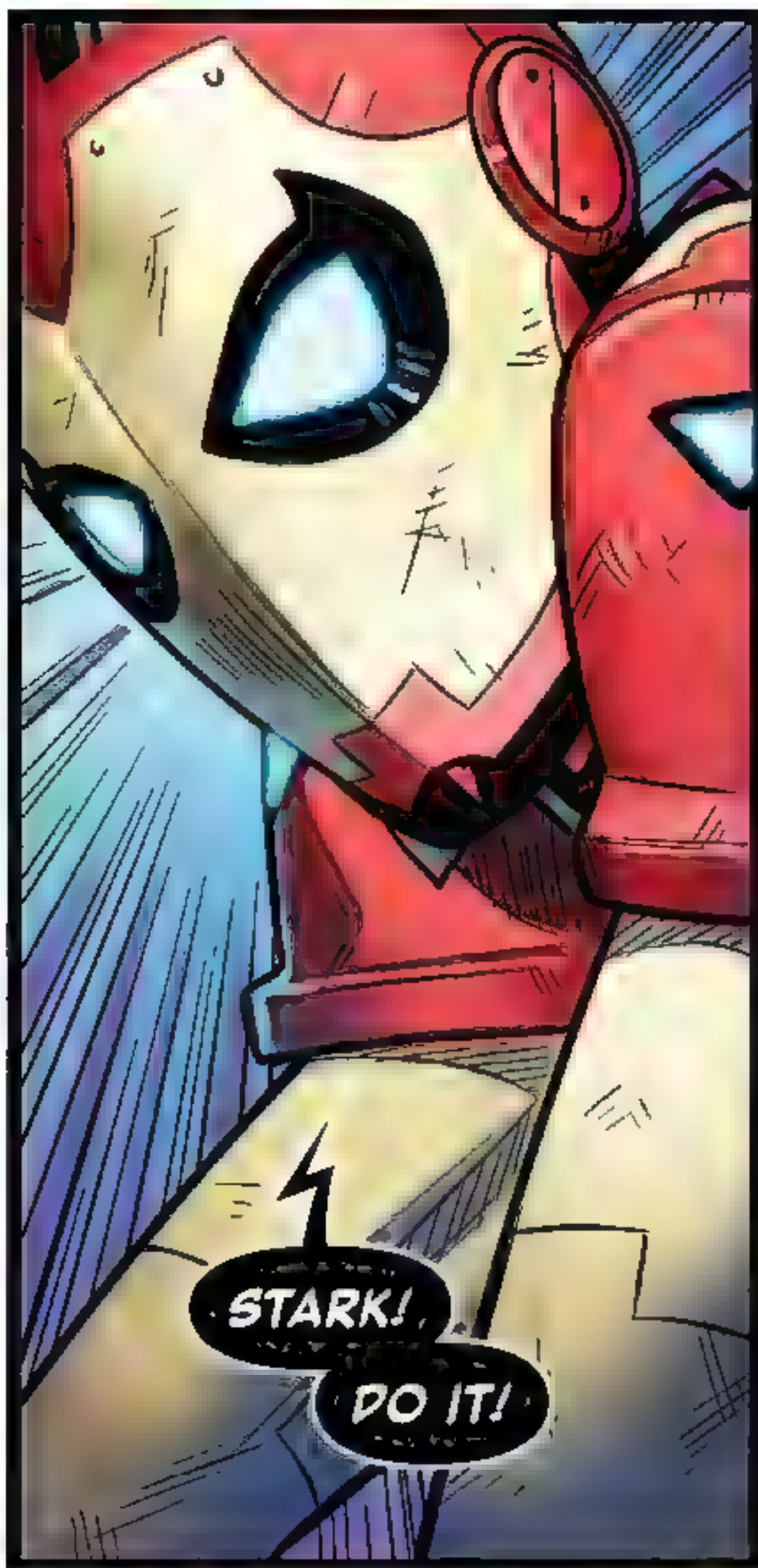
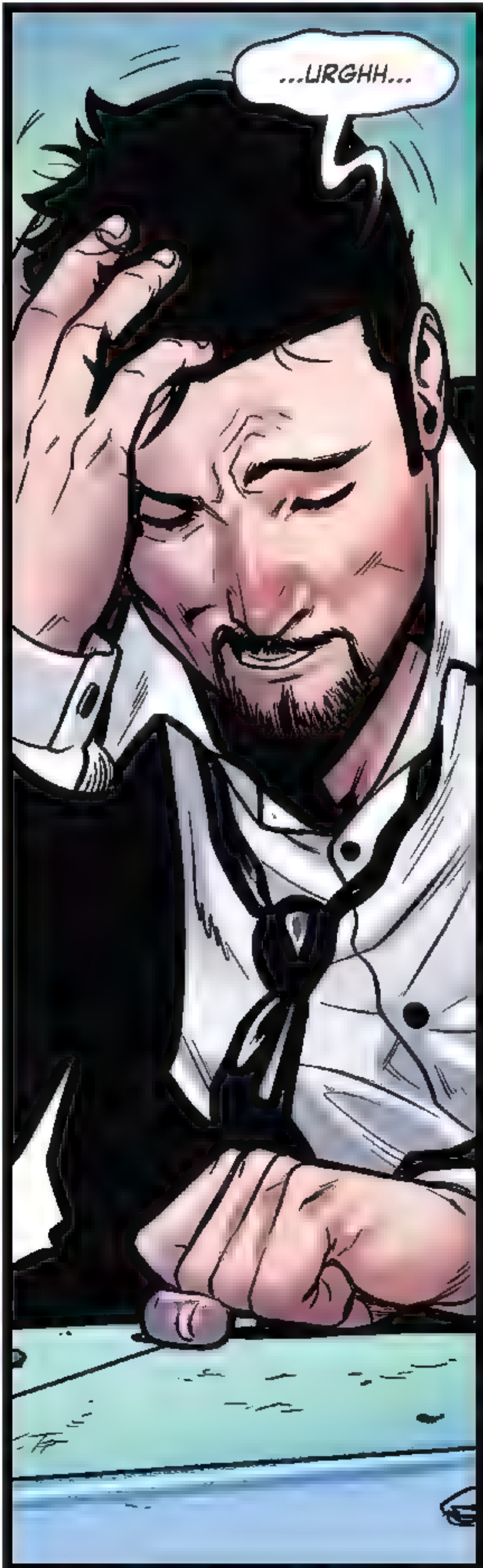
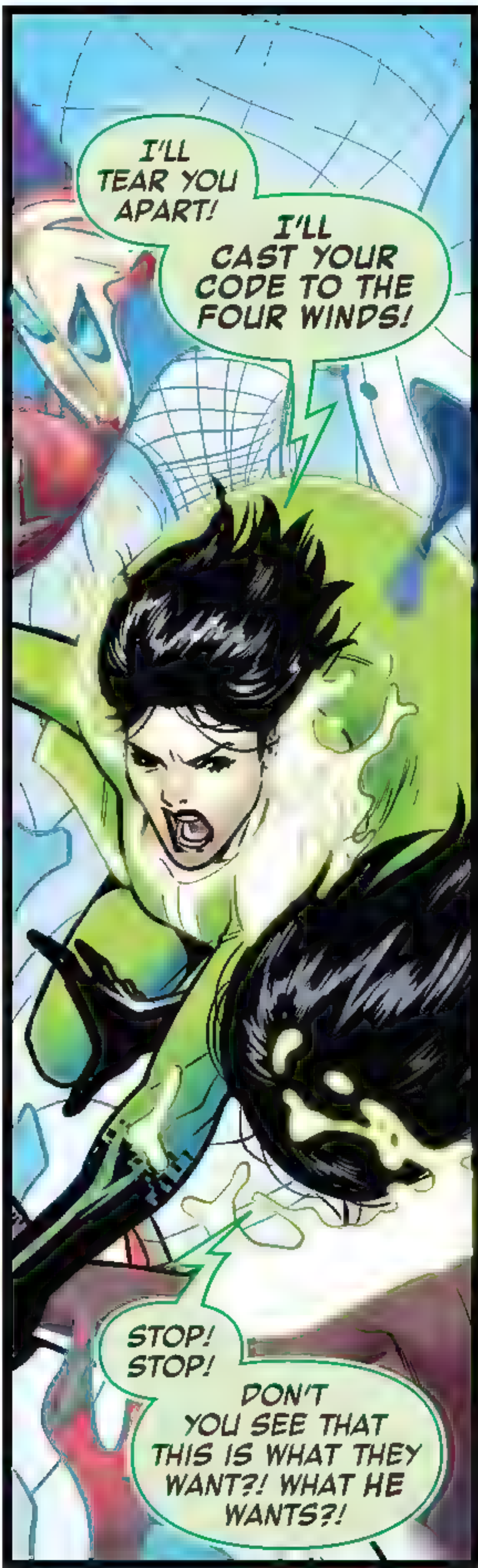
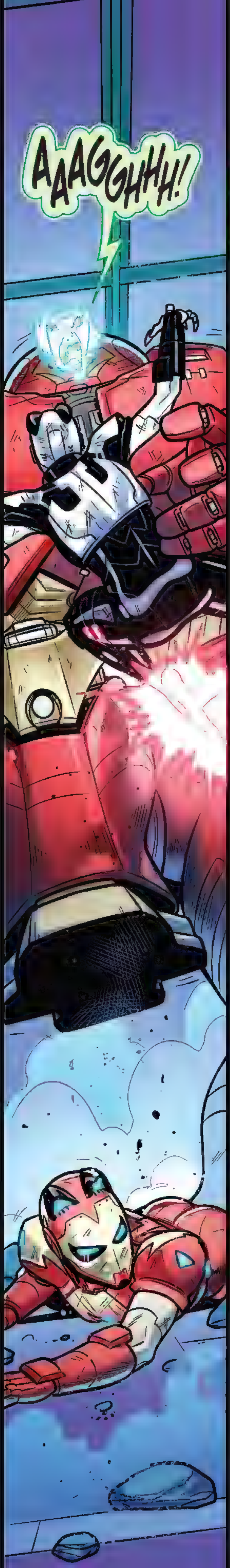
WELL, IT DOESN'T
APPEAR TO HAVE
WORKED.

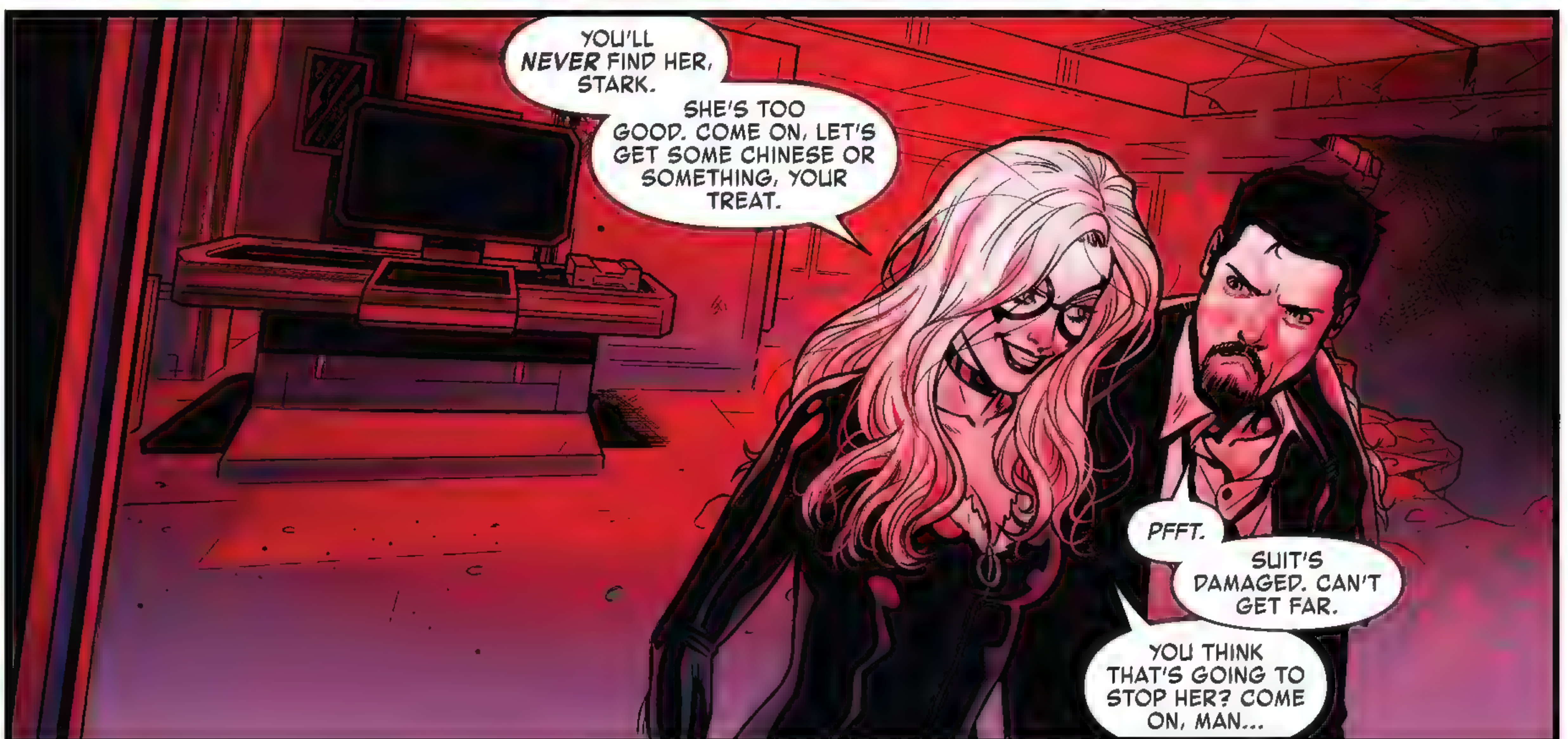
HOW
VERY SAD,
TAMARA.

Recompiling

100%







**SHORTLY:
THE BLACK-MARKET
SUPER VILLAIN
CHOP SHOP OF
CERES GOLDSTEIN,
NEW JERSEY.**

"SHE'S
TAMARA
BLAKE."

"SHE'S THE
IRON CAT."

LOOK.

FIXING UP A
STARK SUIT--WITH THE
KIND OF DAMAGE YOU HAVE--
IT'S GOING TO BE
EXPENSIVE.

BUT DAMN,
THAT'LL COVER IT.
WHAT DID YOU SAY
IT WAS AGAIN?



THIS?

IT'S THE
GAVRILOV
DIAMOND.

THE ONE
THAT GOT
AWAY.







Black Cat (2019) #1 variant by **KRIS ANKA**



Black Cat (2019) #1 variant by **STANLEY "ARTGERM" LAU**



Black Cat (2019) #1, variant by **TRAVEL FOREMAN & RICHARD ISANOVE**



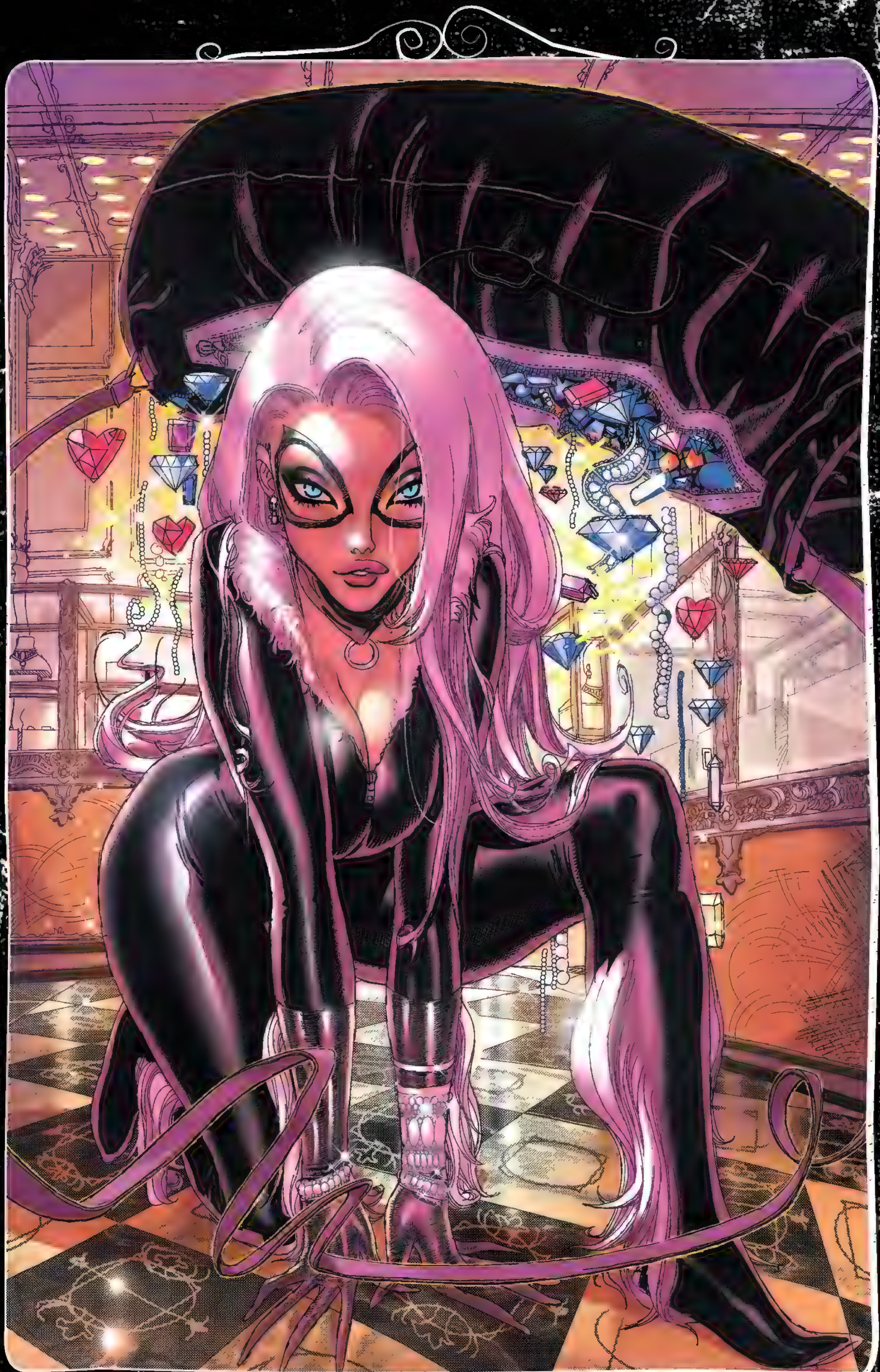
SY
19



Black Cat (2019) #1 Hidden Gem variant by **TERRY DODSON & RACHEL DODSON**



- *Black Cat* (2019) #2 Hidden Gem variant by **TERRY DODSON & RACHEL DODSON**



Black Cat (2019) #2 variant by **ARIST DEYN**



Black Cat (2019) #2 Carnage-ized variant by **MARK BROOKS**



Black Cat (2019) #3 variant by **JEN BARTEL**



MEOW



Black Cat (2019) #3 Bring on the Bad Guys variant by **INHYUK LEE**





Black Cat (2019) #6 2099 variant by **PHIL NOTO**



Black Cat (2019) #7 2020 variant by **OLIVIER VATINE**



Black Cat (2019) #7 Venom Island variant by **OTTO SCHMIDT**



Black Cat (2019) #8 Marvels X variant by **JAY ANACLETO & NEERAJ MENON**



Black Cat (2019) #9 Gwen Stacy variant by **CARLOS GÓMEZ & DAVID CURIEL**



Black Cat (2019) #10 Spider-Woman variant by **ADI GRANOV**



Black Cat (2019) #11 Marvel Zombies variant by **GREG LAND** and **FRANK D'ARMATA**



Black Cat (2019) #12 variant by **SKAN**



Black Cat Annual (2019) #1 variant by **TODD NAUCK**



Black Cat Annual (2019) #1 variant by **GERARDO SANDOVAL** and **MORRY HOLLOWELL**



Black Cat (2020) #1 variant by **SARA PICELLI**



Black Cat (2020) #1 variant by **PATRICK GLEASON & MARTE GRACIA**



Black Cat (2020) #1 variant by **C.F. VILLA & BRIAN REBER**





Black Cat (2020) #1 headshot variant by **TODD NAUCK & RACHELLE ROSENBERG**



Black Cat (2020) #1 Knurlified variant by **TAURIN CLARKE**



Black Cat (2020) #1 design variant by **PEPE LARRAZ**



Black Cat (2020) #2 variant by **OLIVIER COIPEL**



Black Cat (2020) #2 variant by **ARIST DEYN**



Black Cat (2020) #2 variant by **ADAM HUGHES**



Black Cat (2020) #3 variant by **NABETSE ZITRO & MORRY HOLLOWELL**



Black Cat (2020) #4 variant by **NATACHA BUSTOS & MATTHEW WILSON**



Black Cat (2020) #4 variant by **ADAM HUGHES**

MARVEL
\$3.99



WOMEN'S HISTORY
FELICIA HARDY
EST. 1979

#4
VARIANT EDITION

BLACK CAT





Black Cat (2020) #5 variant by **EMA LUPACCHINO & BRIAN REBER**



Black Cat (2020) #7 Spider-Man villains variant by **TERRY DODSON & RACHEL DODSON**.



Black Cat (2020) #7 Pride Month variant by **PHIL JIMENEZ & FEDERICO BLEE**



Black Cat Annual (2021) #1 variant by **TRAVIS CHAREST**



*Black Cat Annual (2021) #1 connecting variant by **RON LIM** & **ISRAEL SILVA***



INTRODUCING
**TIGER
DIVISION!**



Black Cat Annual (2021) #1, 2nd-printing variant by **SUNGHAN YUNE**



Black Cat (2020) #8 variant by **PEACH MOMOKO**



Black Cat (2020) #8 Captain America 80th Anniversary variant by **LEINIL FRANCIS YU & SUNNY GHO**



Black Cat (2020) #9 variant by **JOSHUA "SWAY" SWABY**



Black Cat (2020) #10 variant by **PERE PÉREZ & FRANK D'ARMATA**



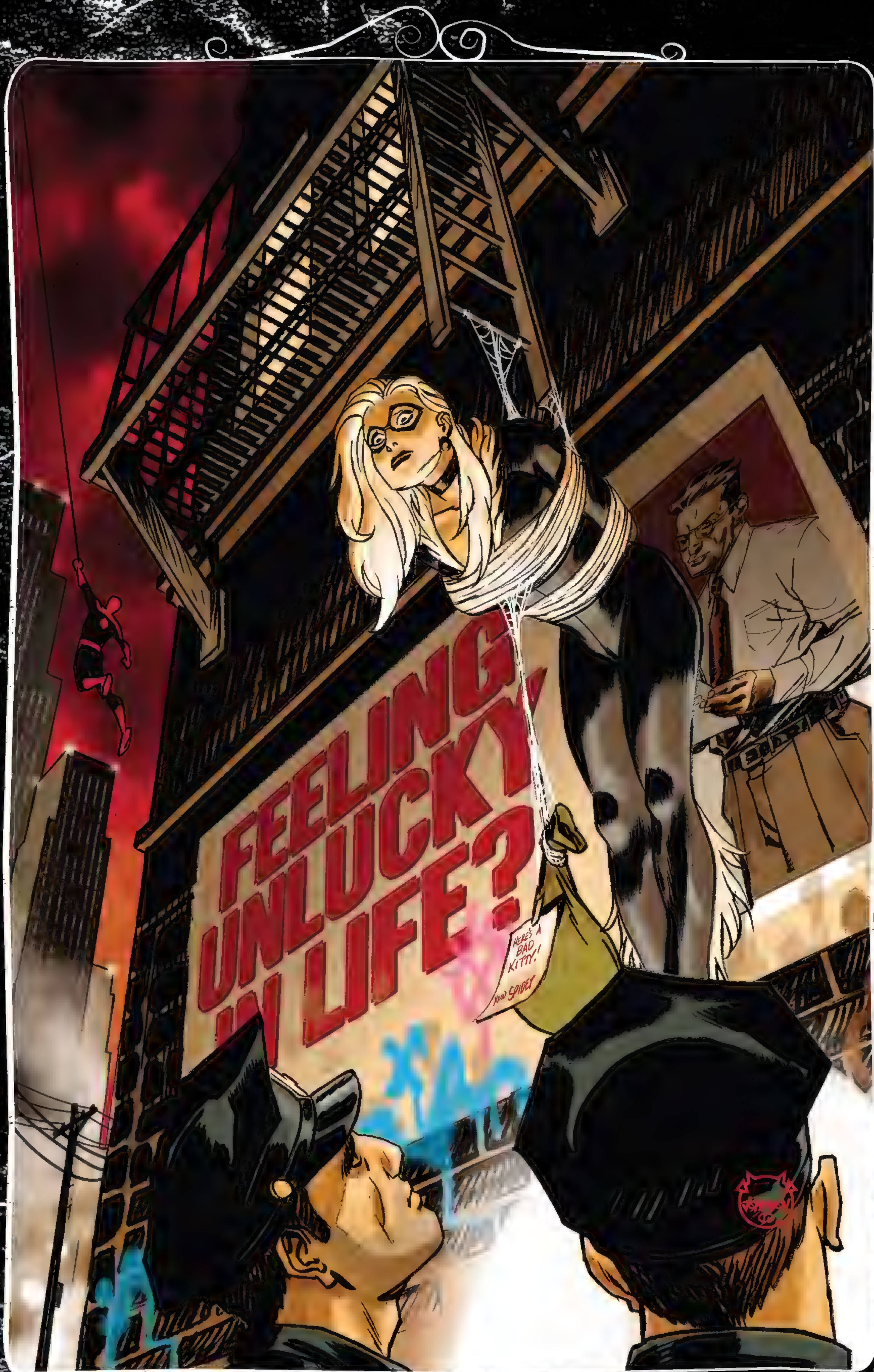
Black Cat (2020) #10 Miles Morales: Spider-Man 10th Anniversary variant by **DIKE RUAN** & **DAVE McCAIG**



Black Cat (2020) #8-10 connecting variants by **EMA LUPACCHINO & BRIAN REBER**



Giant-Size Black Cat: Infinity Score lucky variant by **DAVE JOHNSON**



Giant-Size Black Cat: Infinity Score unlucky variant by **DAVE JOHNSON**



Giant-Size Black Cat: Infinity Score variant by **JEEHYUNG LEE**



Iron Cat #1 Stormbreakers variant by **PEACH MOMOKO**



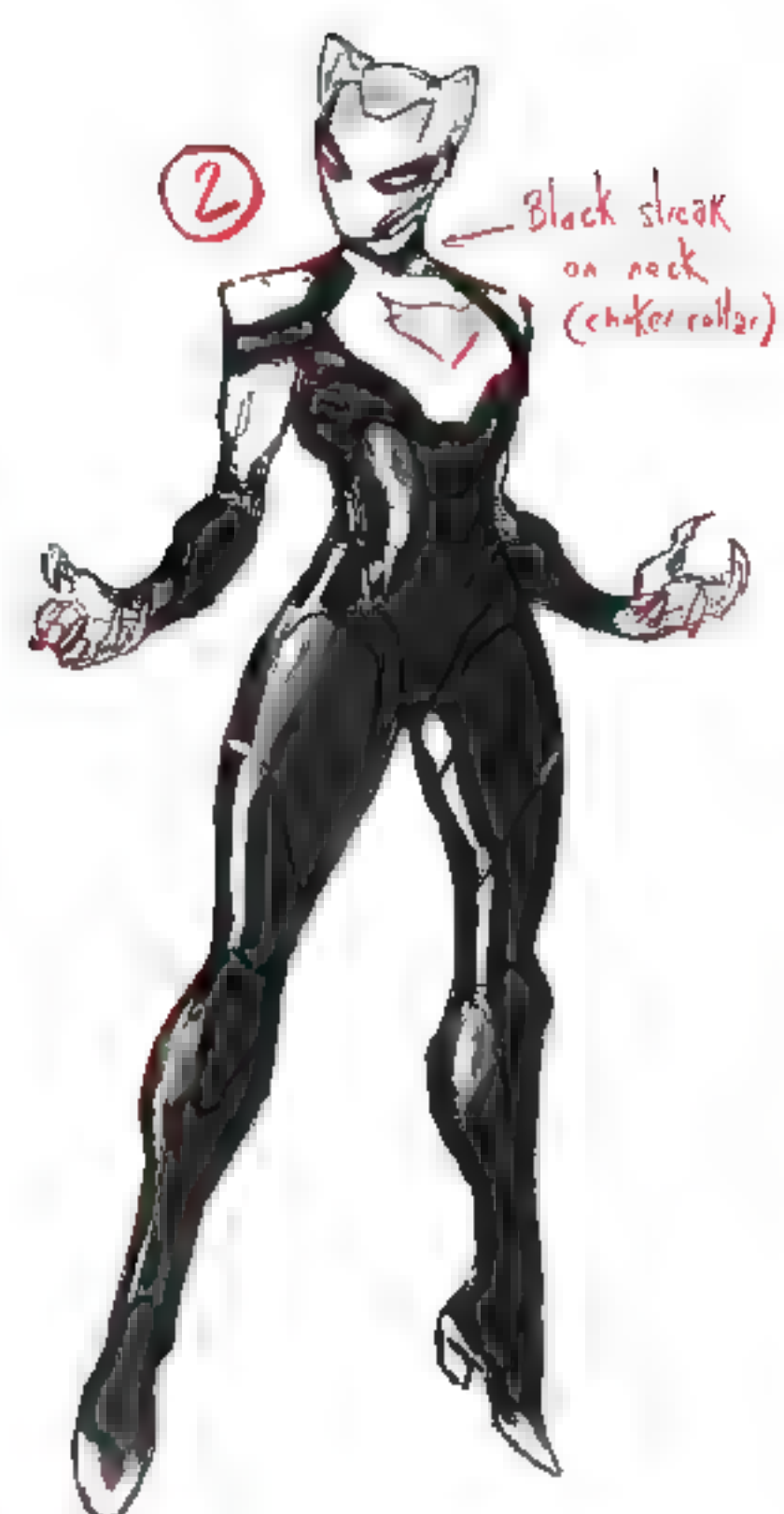
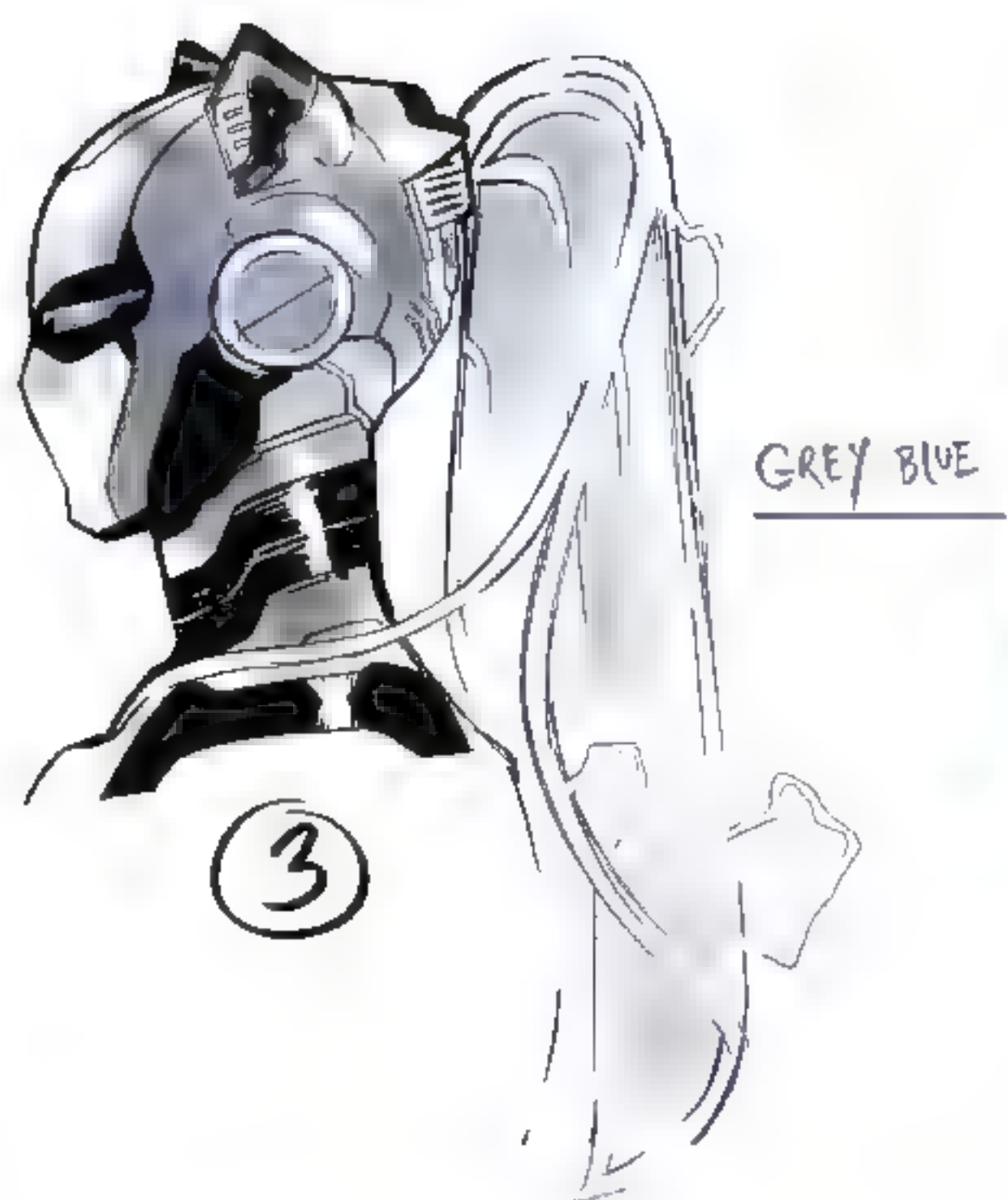
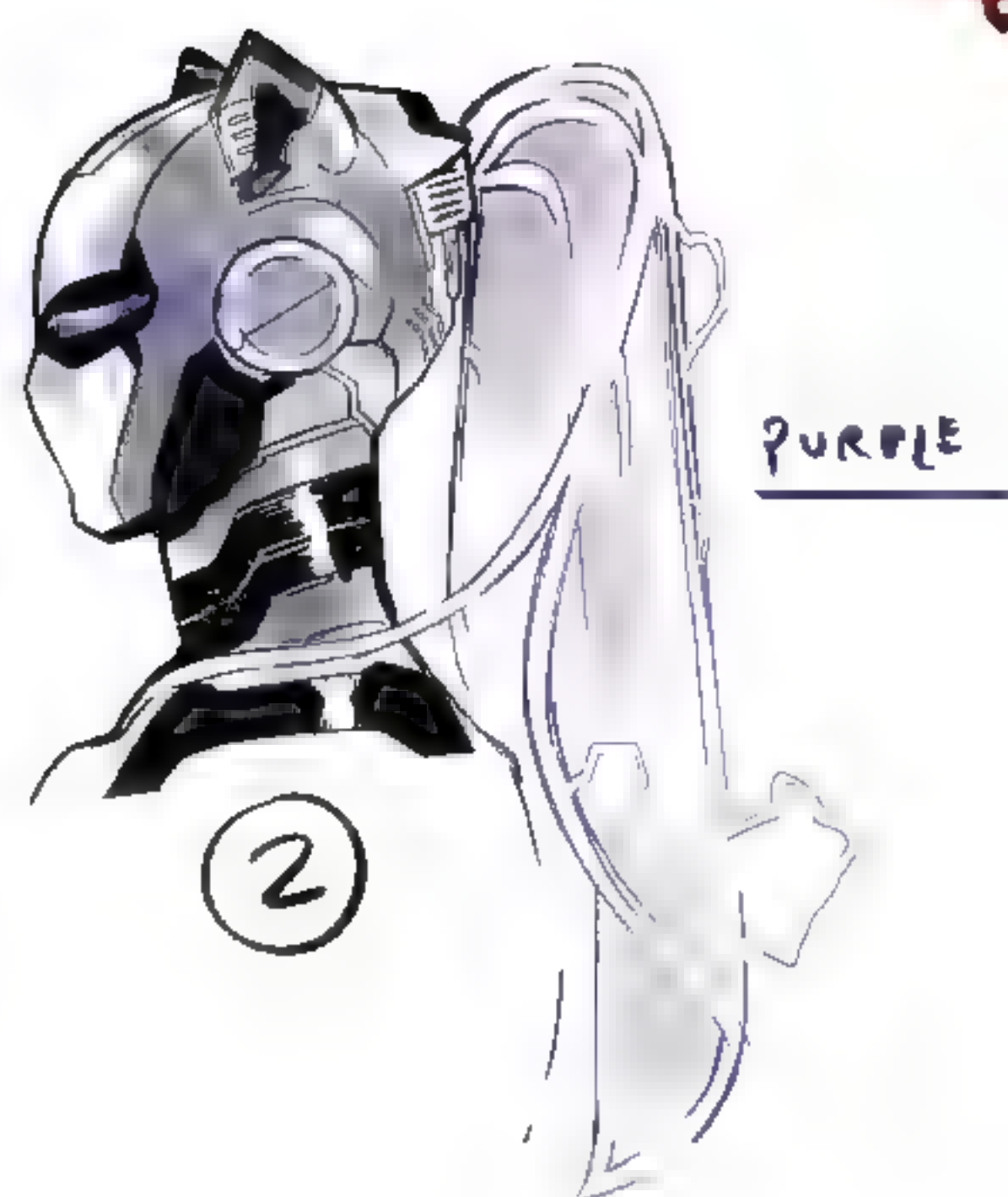
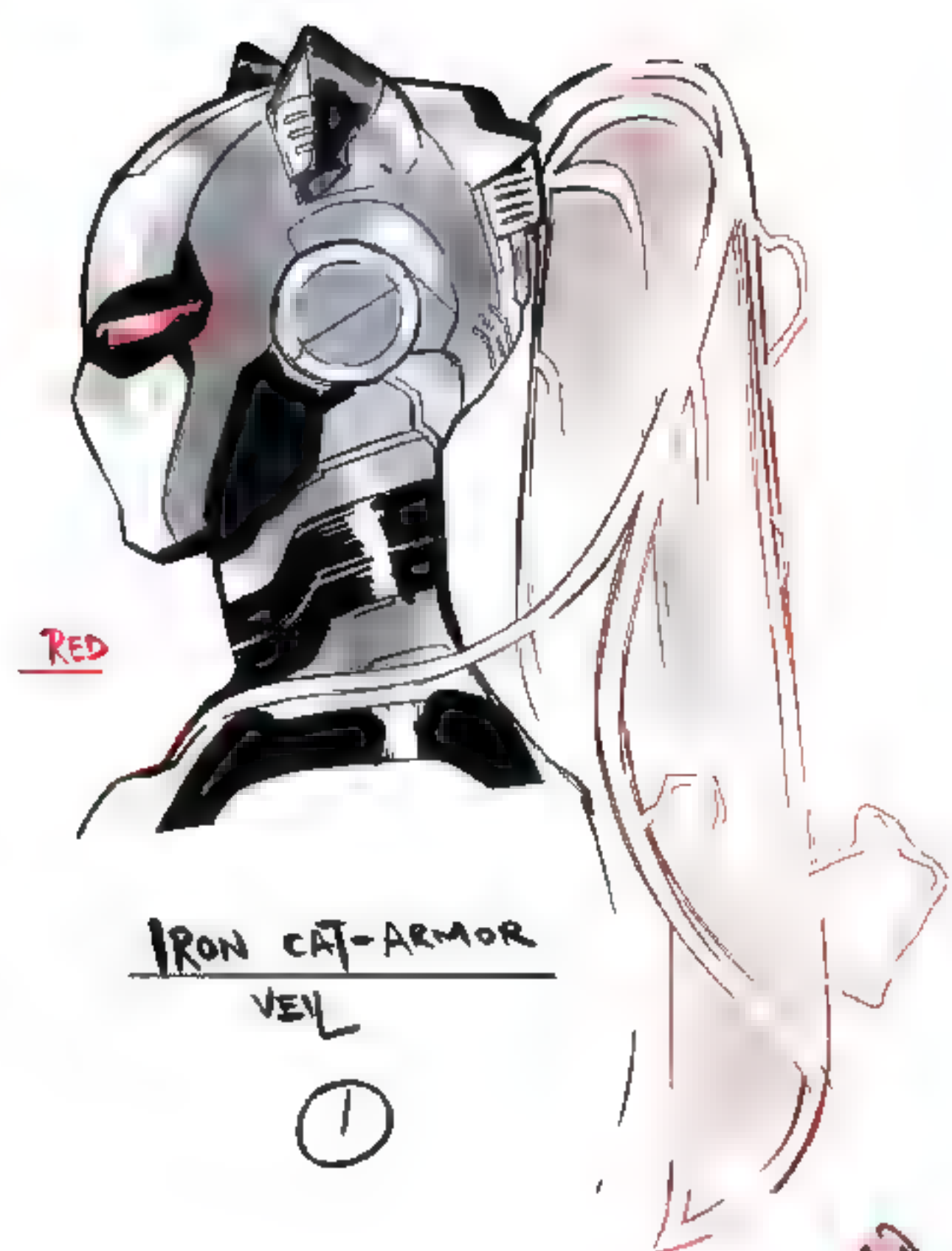
Iron Cat #1 variant by **RON LIM & ISRAEL SILVA**



Iron Cat #1 variant by **SKAN**



SKOTTIE
YOUNG
2022



IRON CAT ARMOR
Villa



Iron Cat #2 variant by **KEI ZAMA & RUTH REDMOND**



Iron Cat #3 variant by **EMA LUPACCHINO & DAVID CURIEL**



Iron Cat #4 variant by **KEI ZAMA & RUTH REDMOND**



Iron.Cat #5 variant by **JUNGGEUN YOON**



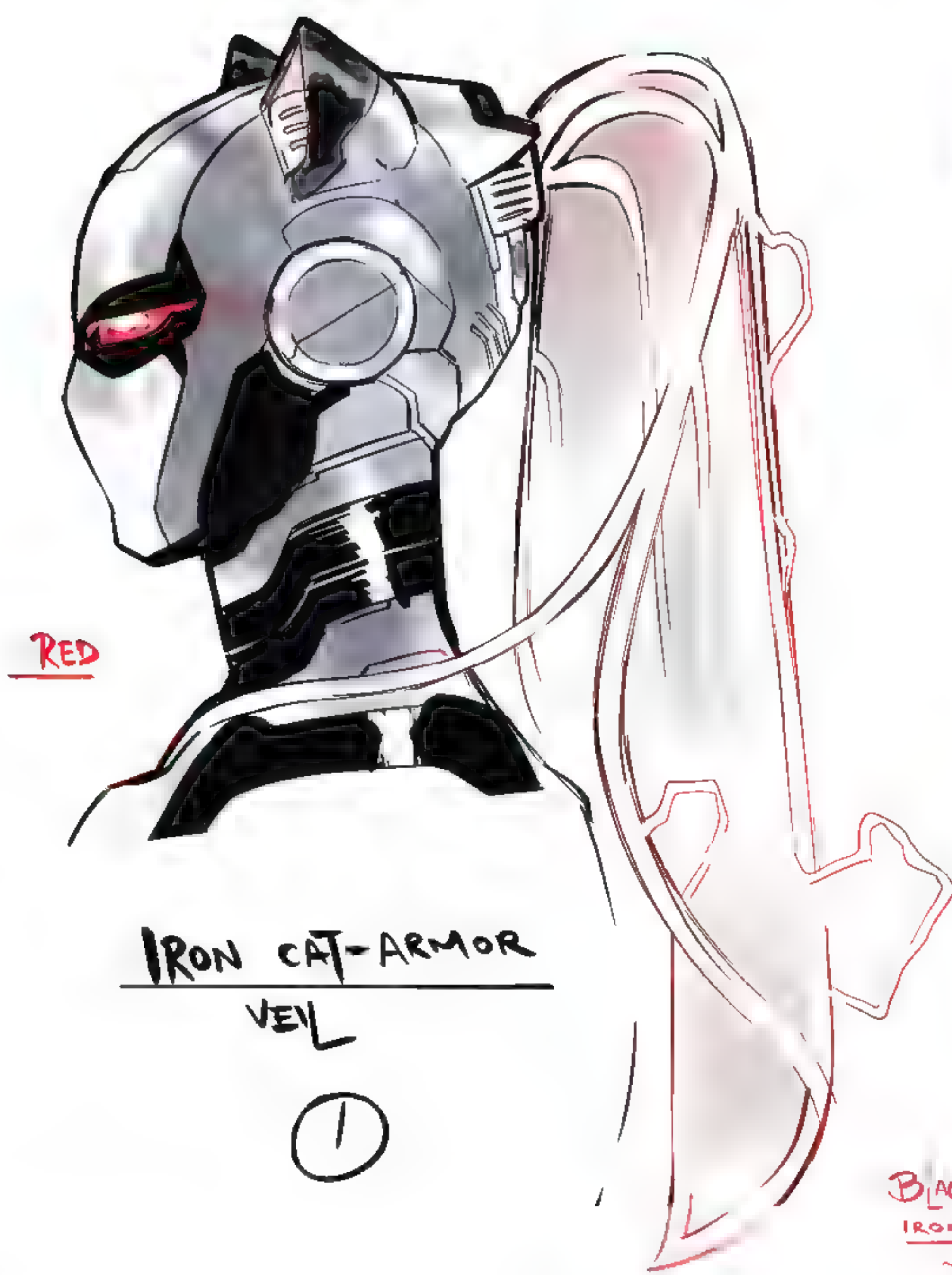
Black Cat (2020) #1 pinup by **NINA VAKUEVA**



Black Cat #11
IRON CAT ARMOR
villa

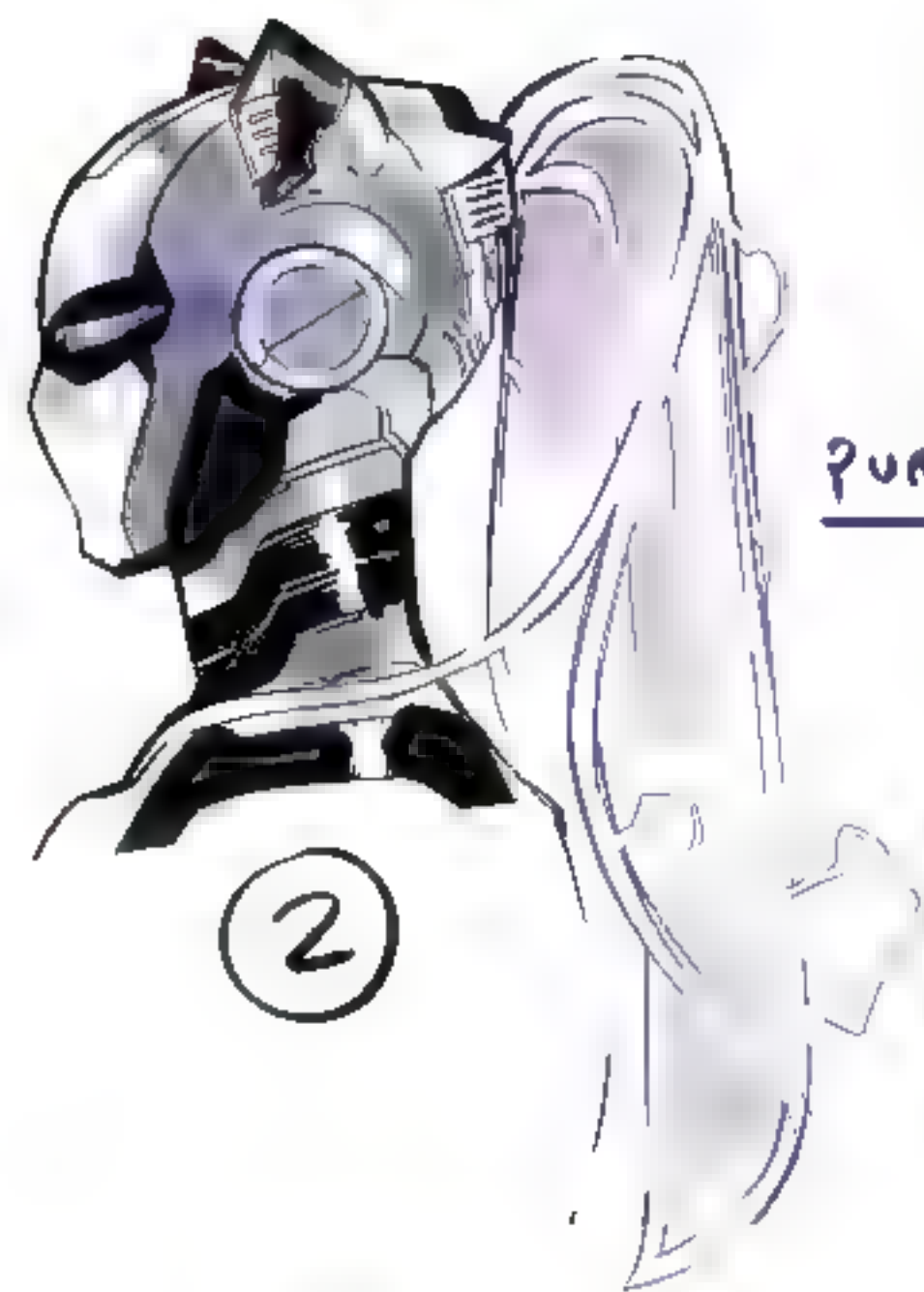


Black Cat #11
IRON CAT ARMOR
villa

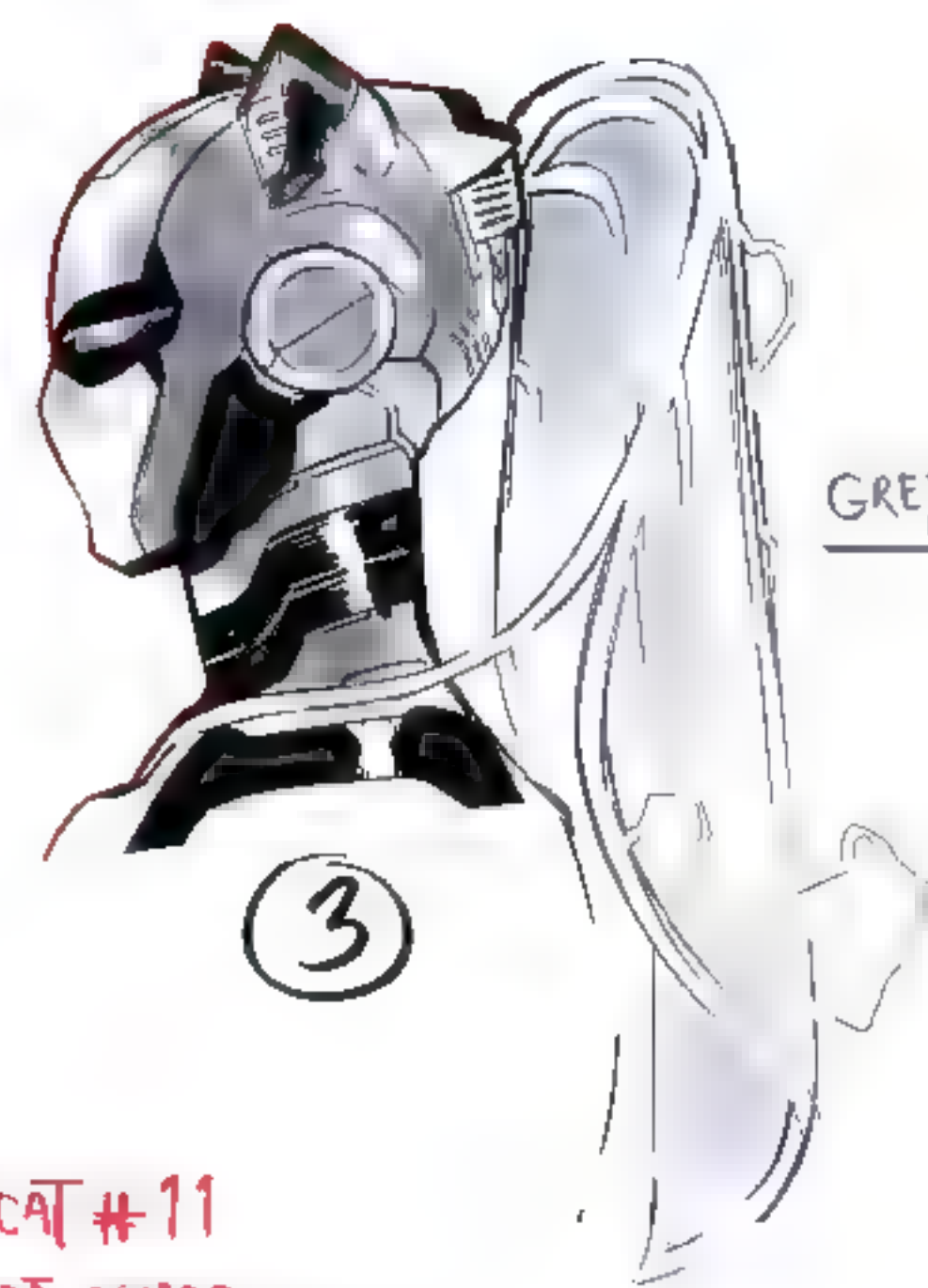


RED

IRON CAT-ARMOR
VEIL



PURPLE



GREY BLUE

Black Cat #11
IRON CAT ARMOR
villa

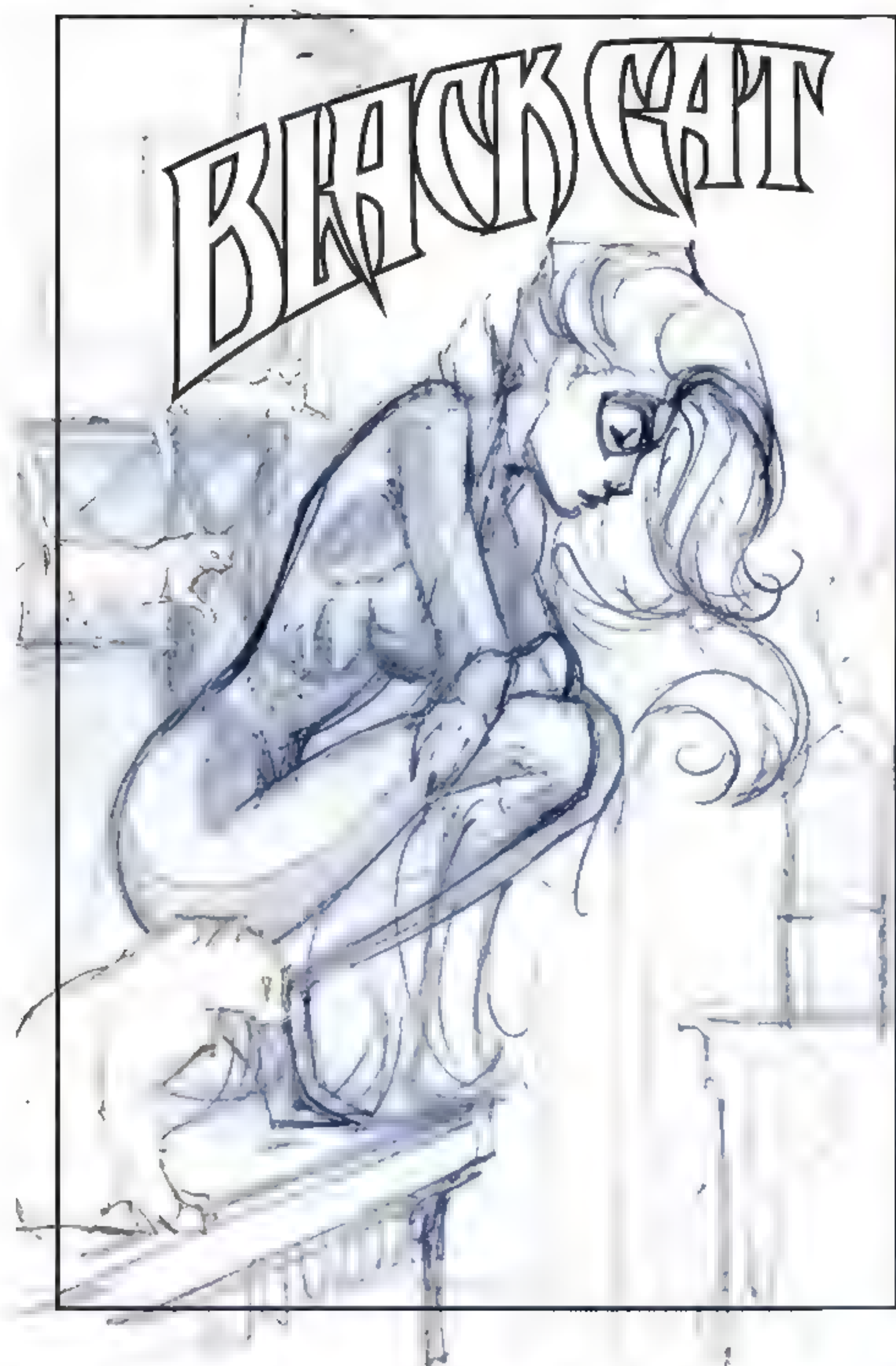


Black Cat and Tiger Division character sketches by **JOEY VAZQUEZ**





Tiger Division character sketches by **JOEY VAZQUEZ**

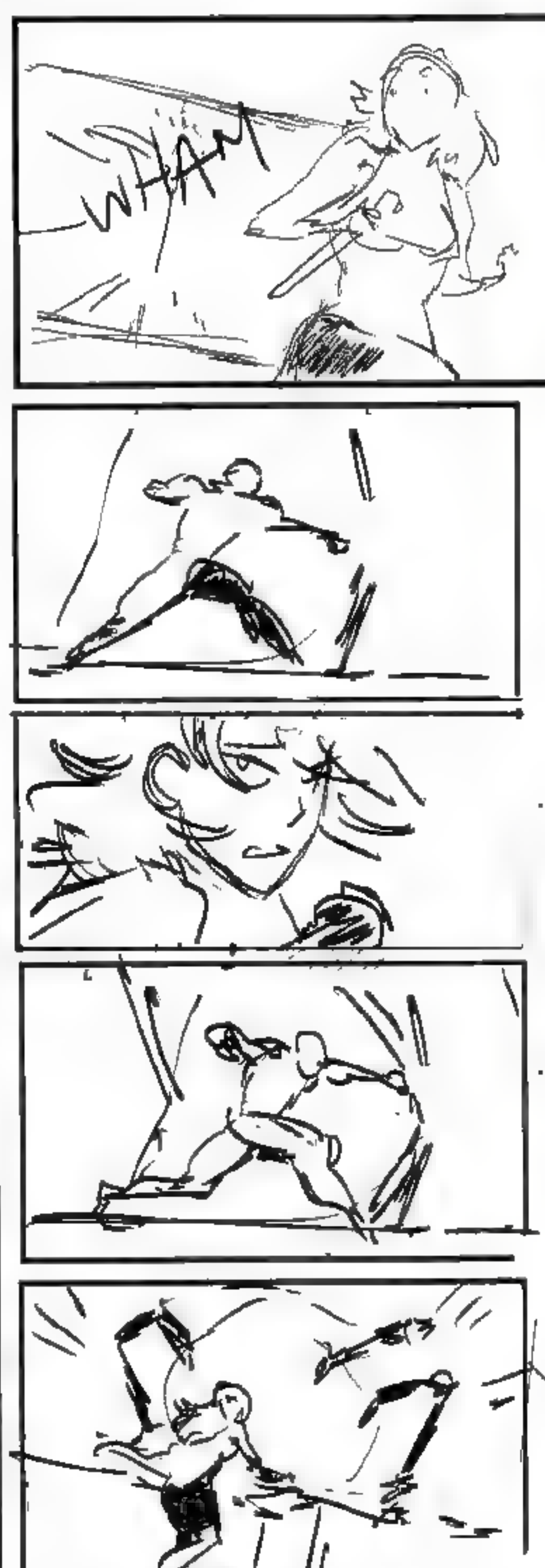


*Black Cat (2019) #11-12 cover sketches by **J. SCOTT CAMPBELL***



*Black Cat (2019) #12 variant cover sketches by **SKAN***

18



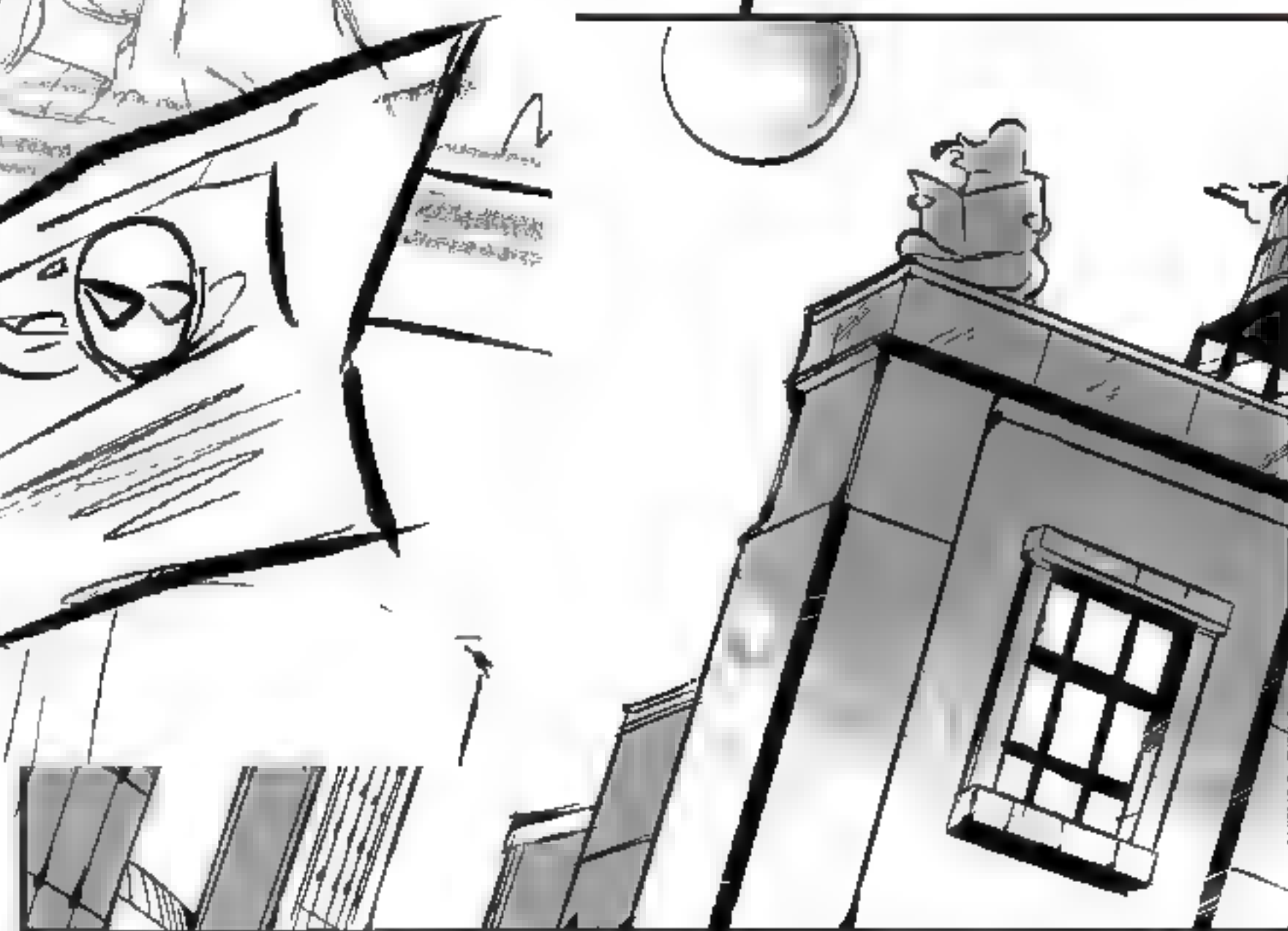
20







20



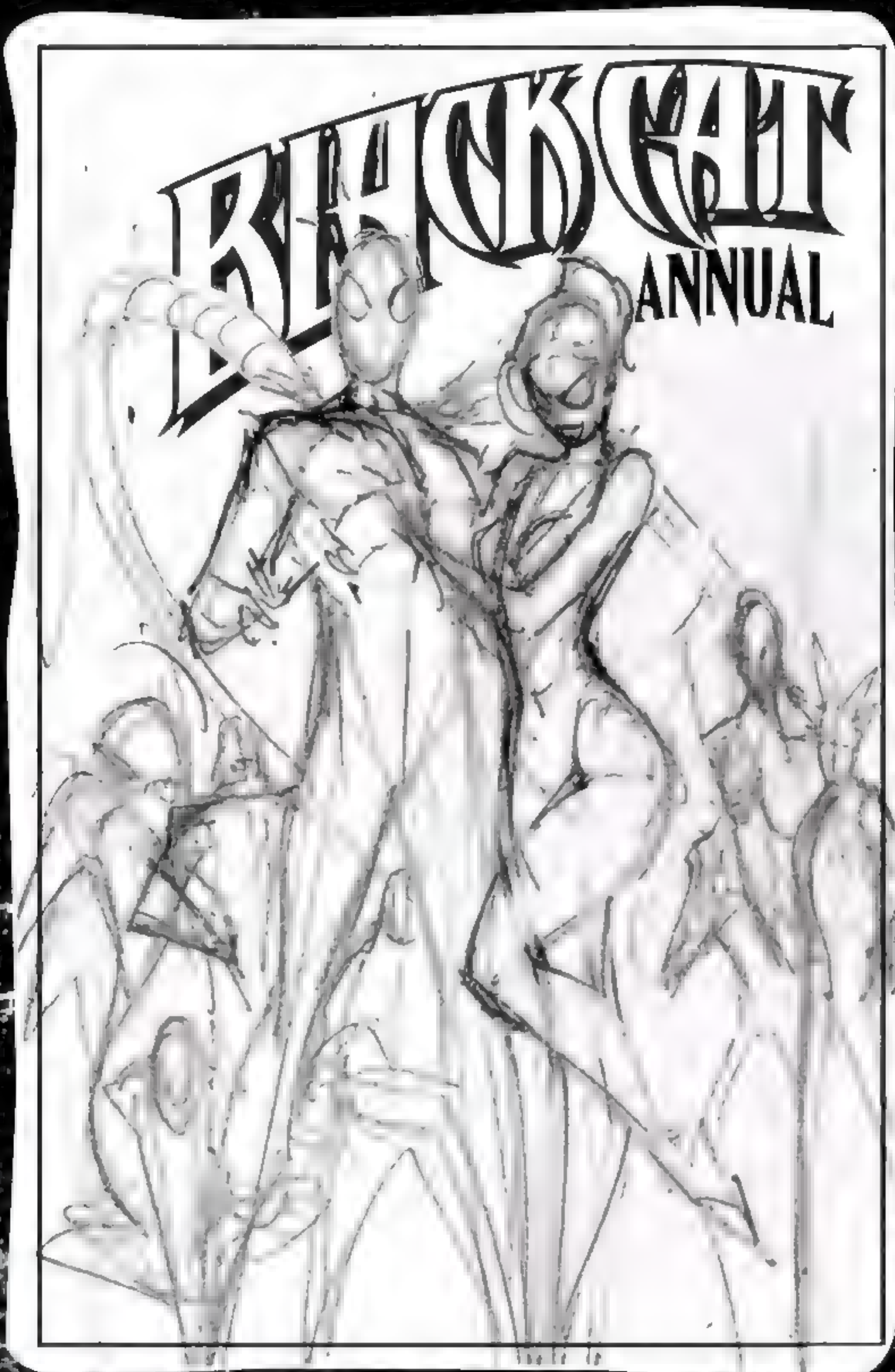




Black Cat Annual (2019) #1 variant cover art by
GERARDO SANDOVAL



Black Cat Annual (2019) #1 variant cover art by
TODD NAUCK



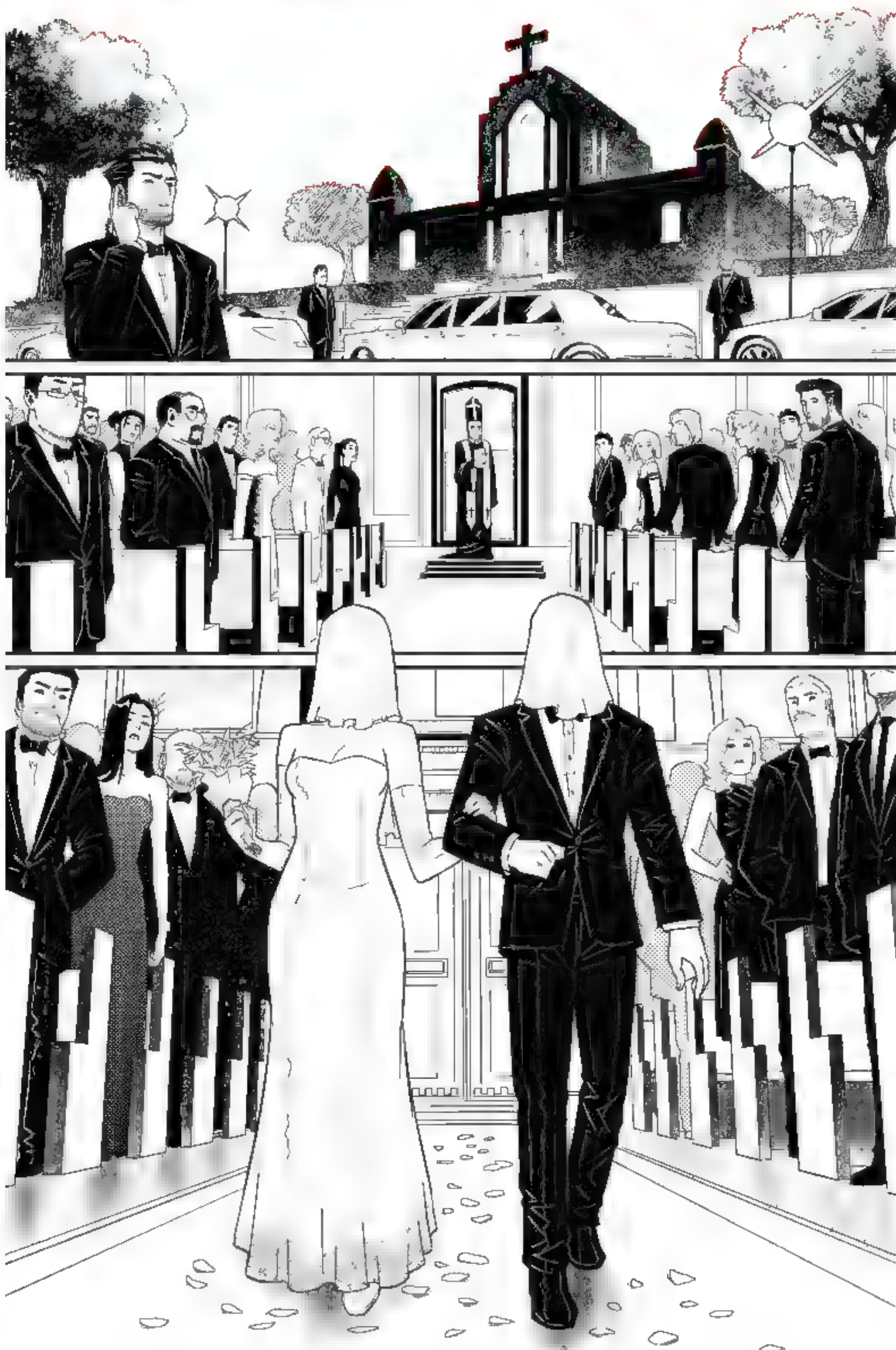
Black Cat Annual (2019) #1 cover sketch and art by **J. SCOTT CAMPBELL**





BLACKCAT
ANNUAL #1

JOEY VAZQUEZ 2019

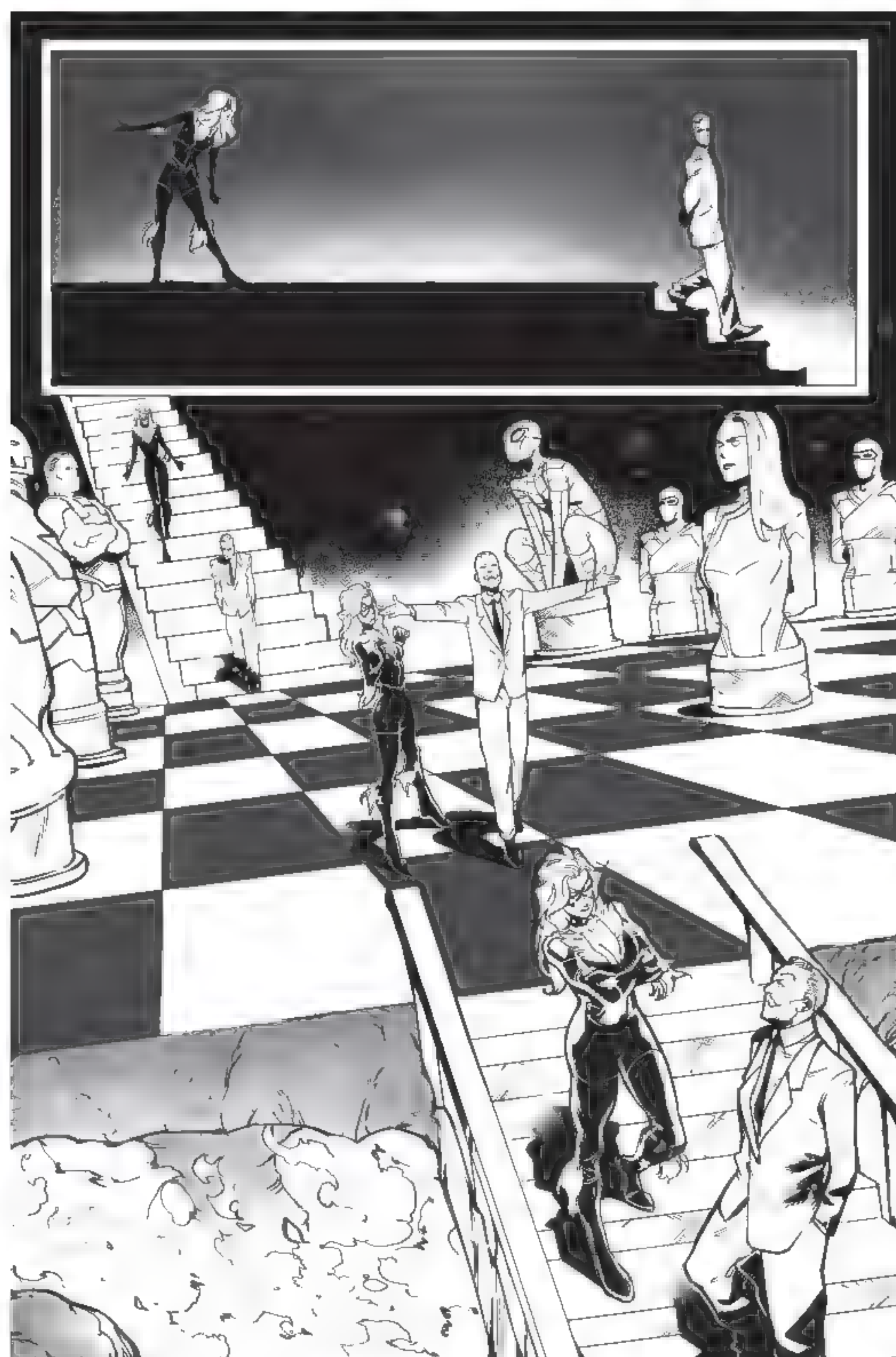
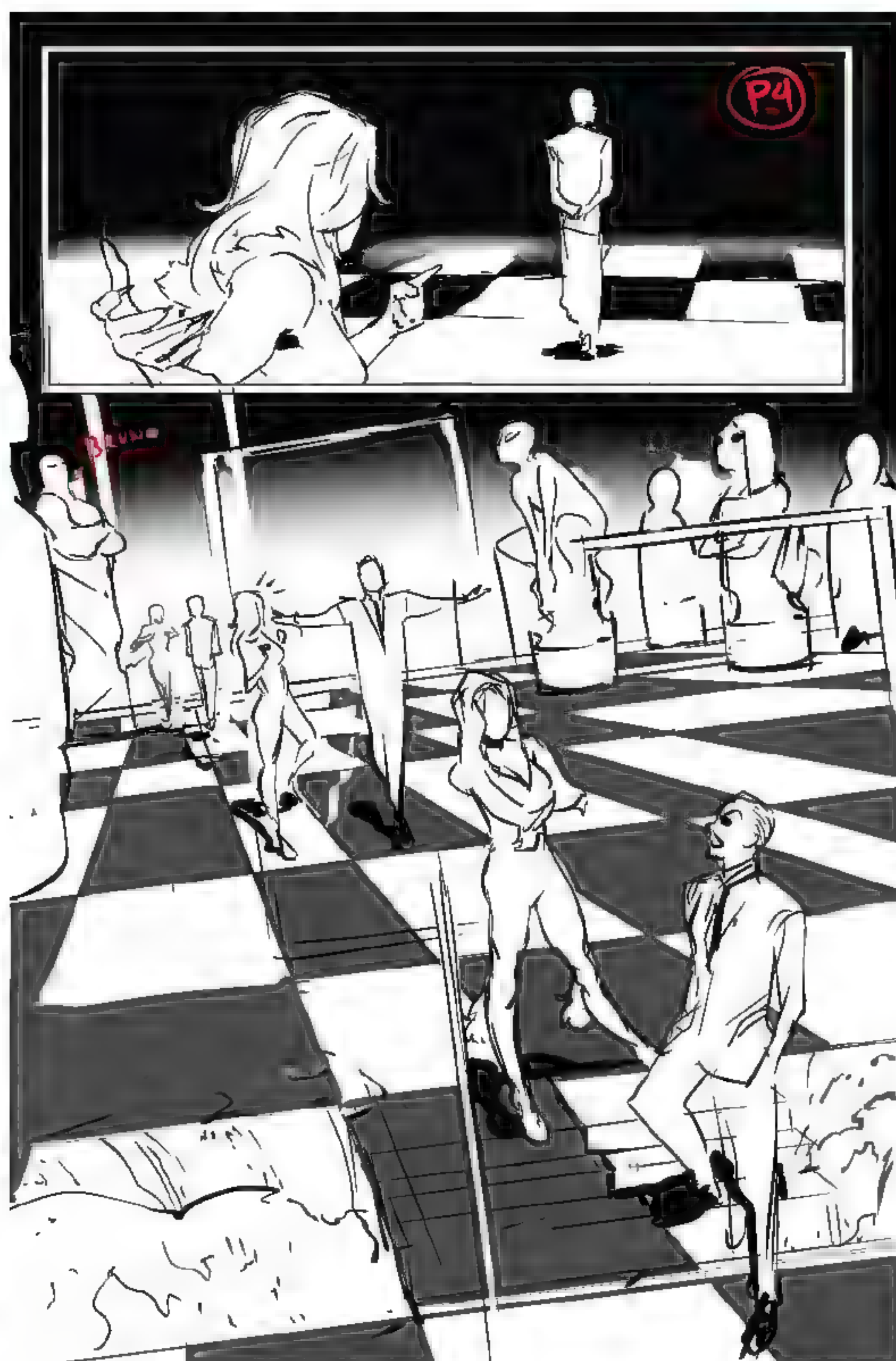
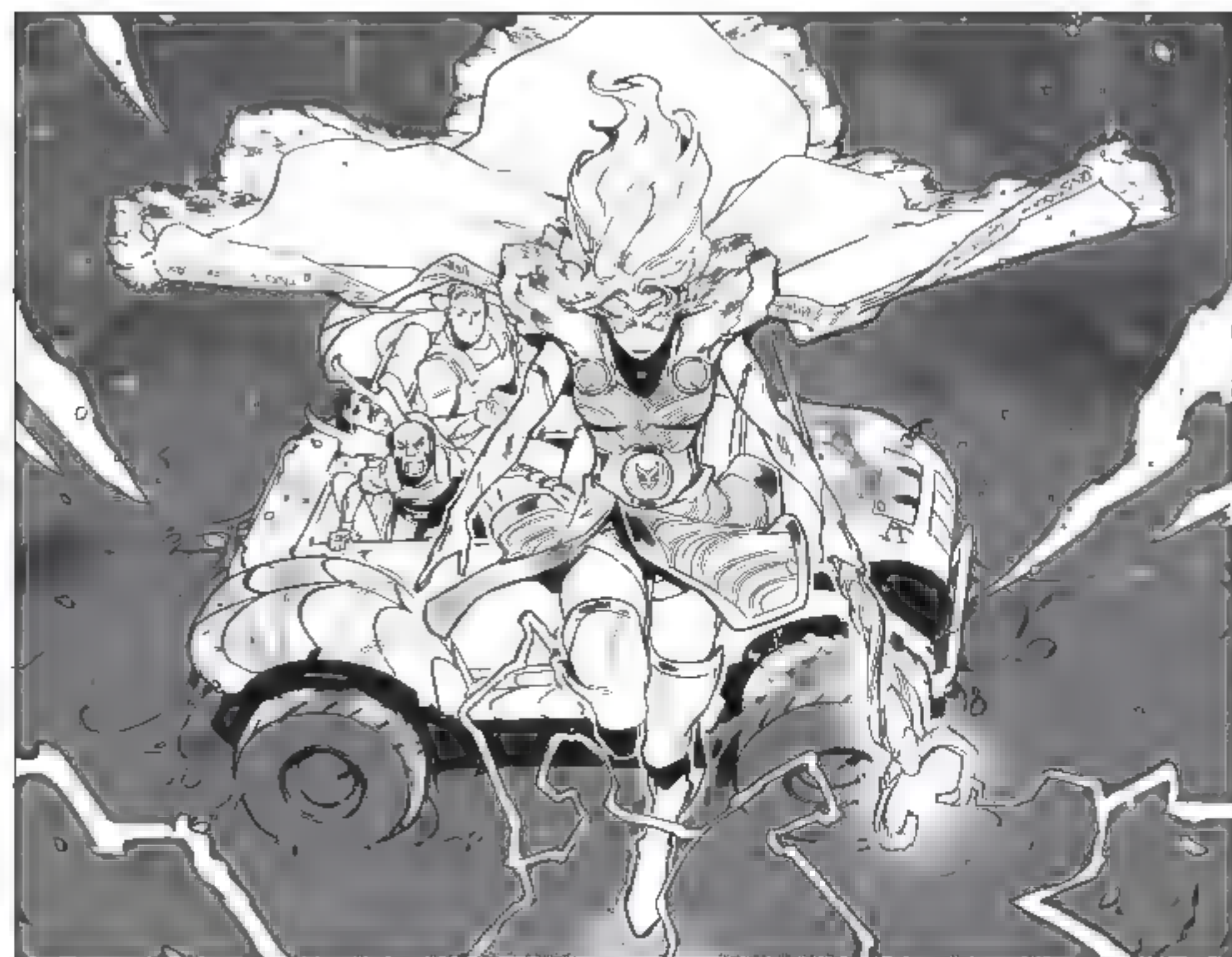
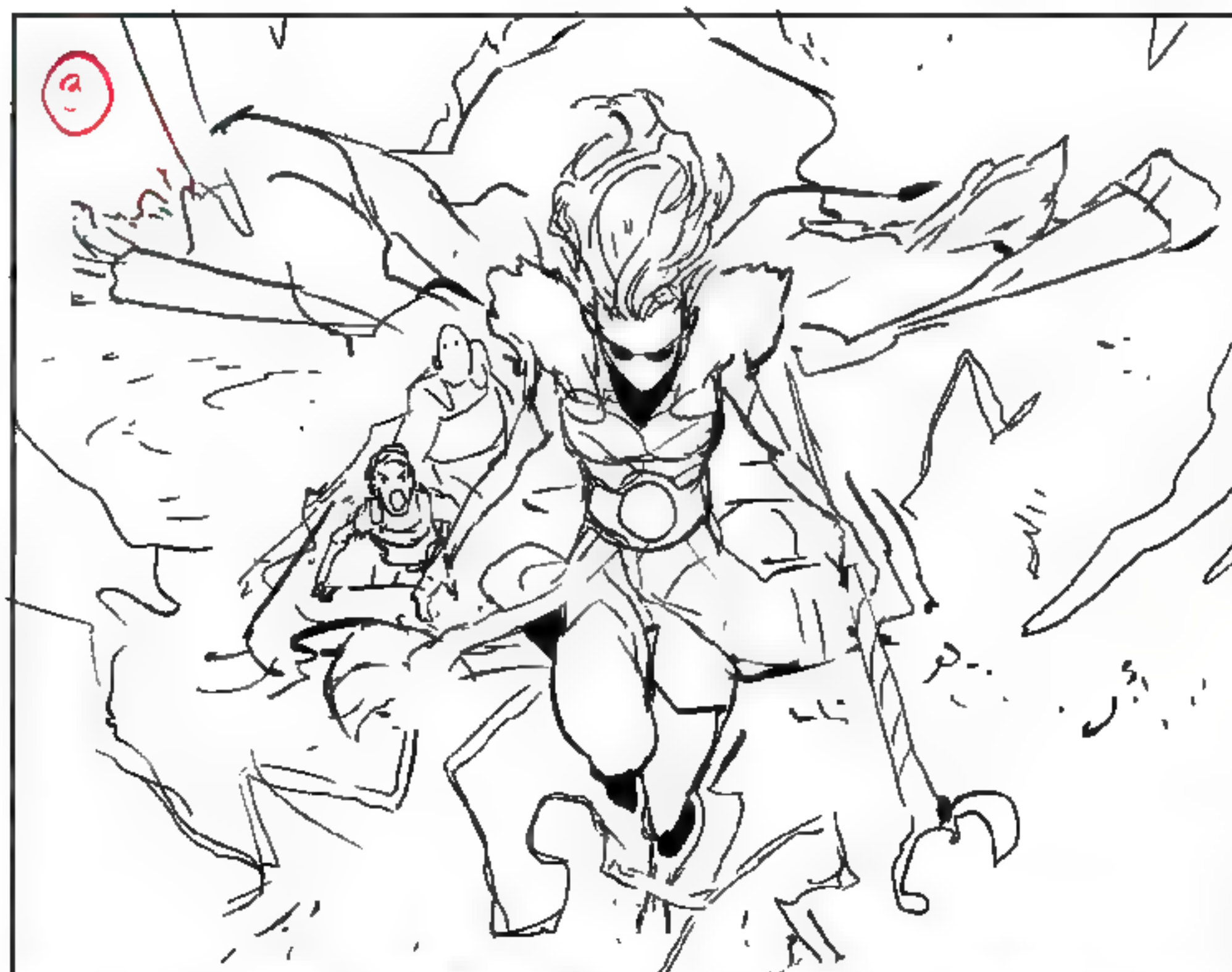


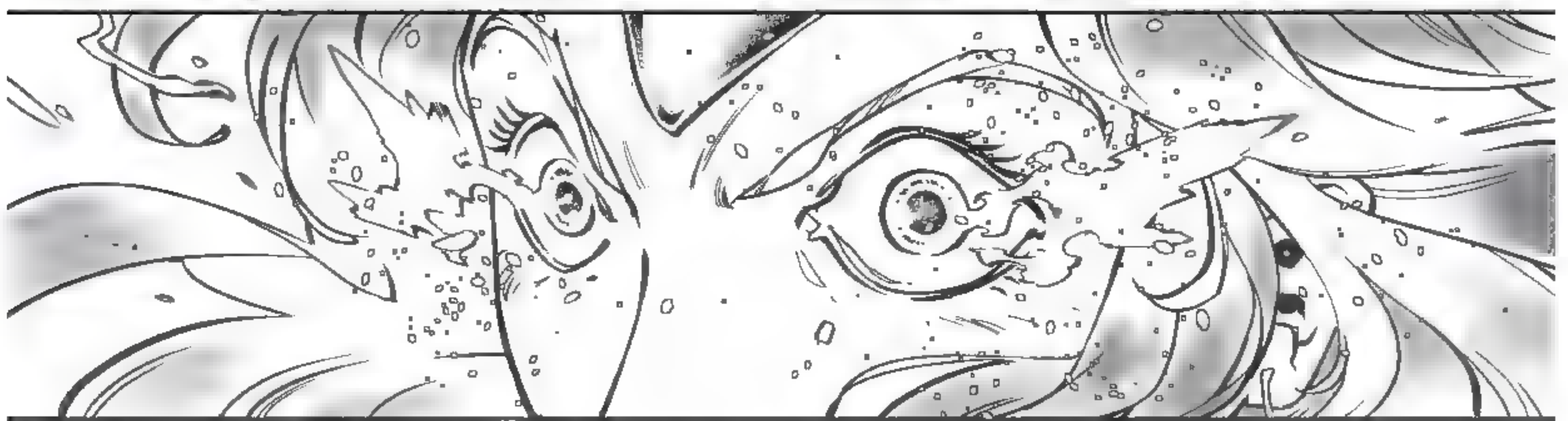
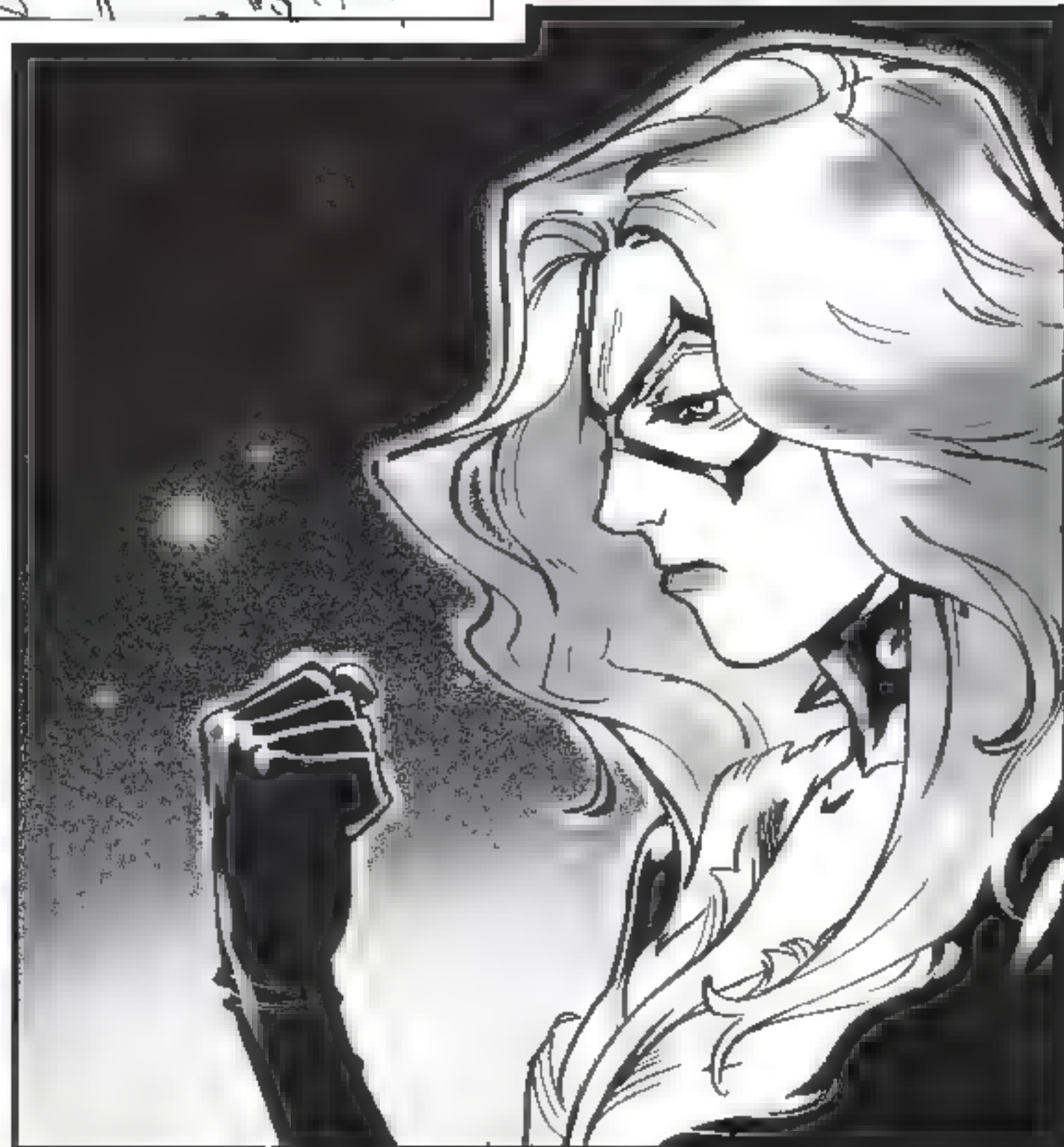
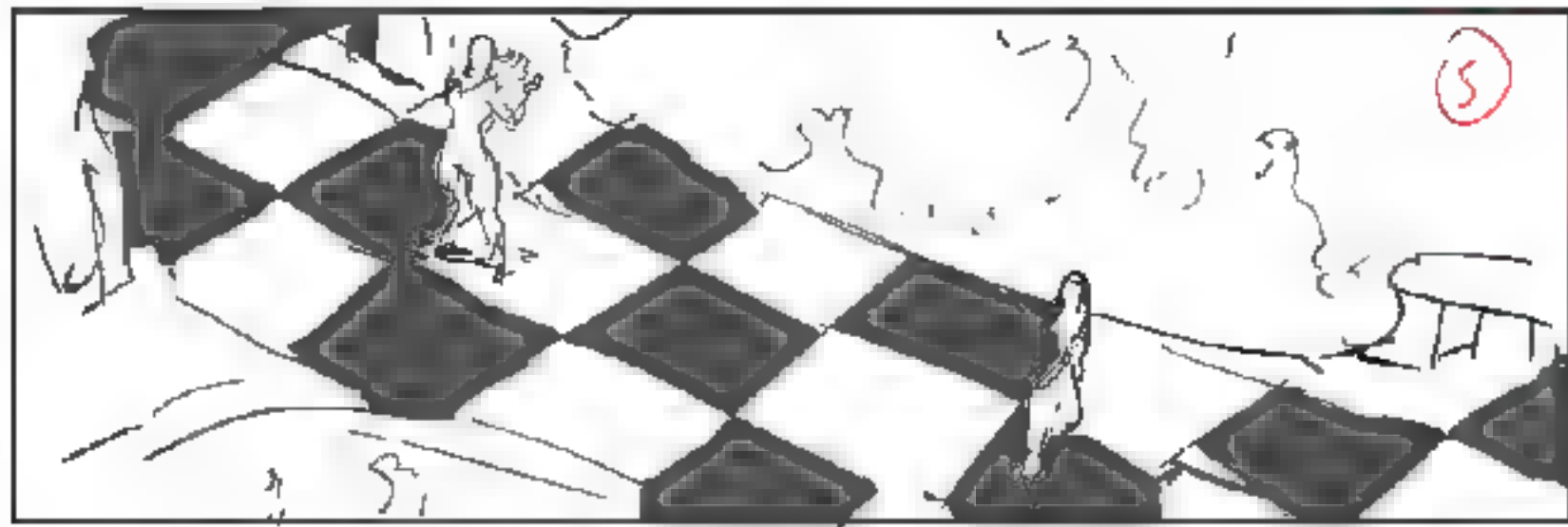


Black Cat Annual (2019) #1, pages 14-15 art by **JUAN GEDEON**



Black Cat Annual (2019) #1, pages 19 & 24 art by **NATACHA BUSTOS**







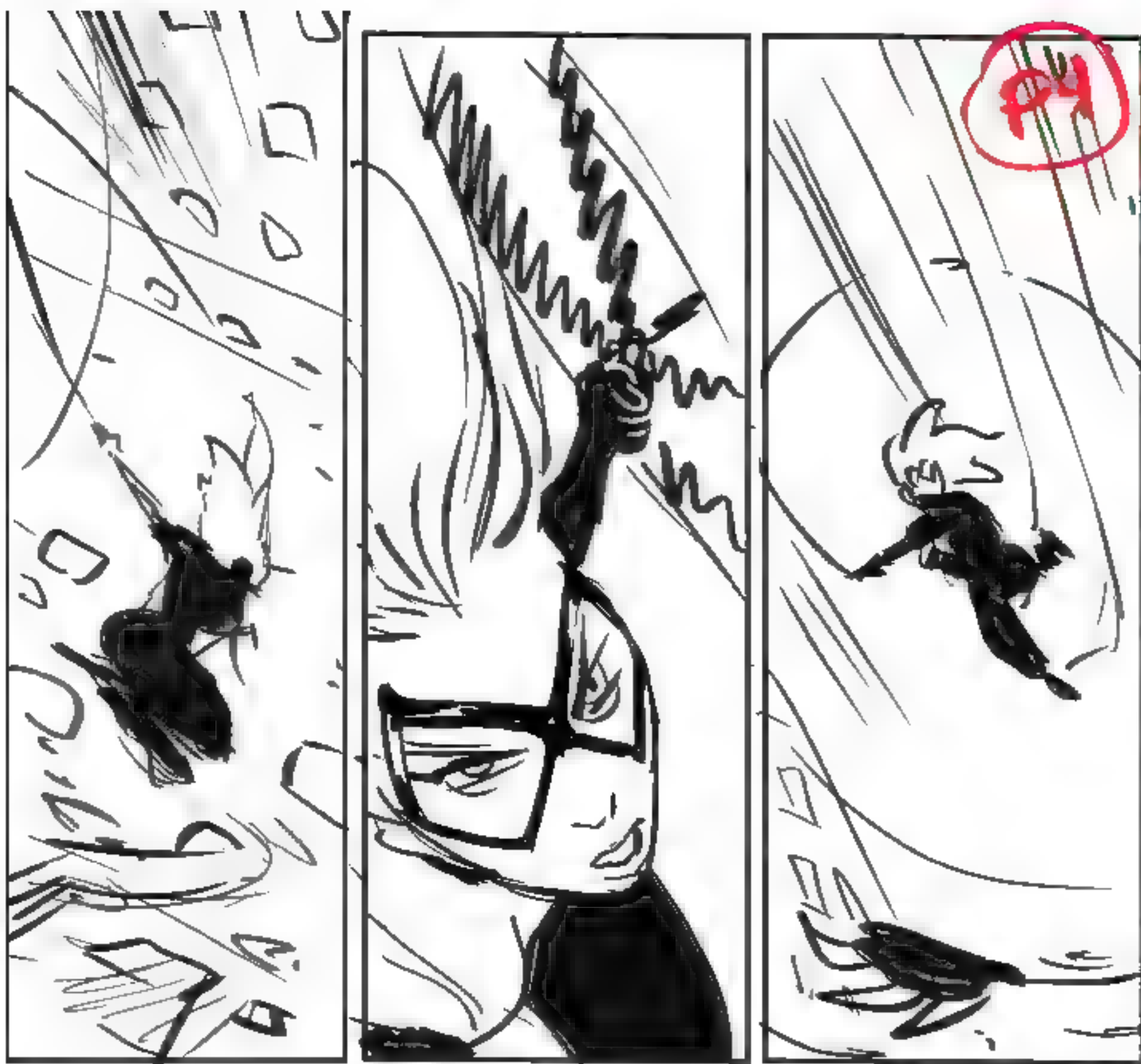








Black Cat (2020) #9, page 16 layouts and inks by **C.F. VILLA**



Black Cat (2020) #10, page 4 layouts and inks **C.F. VILLA**



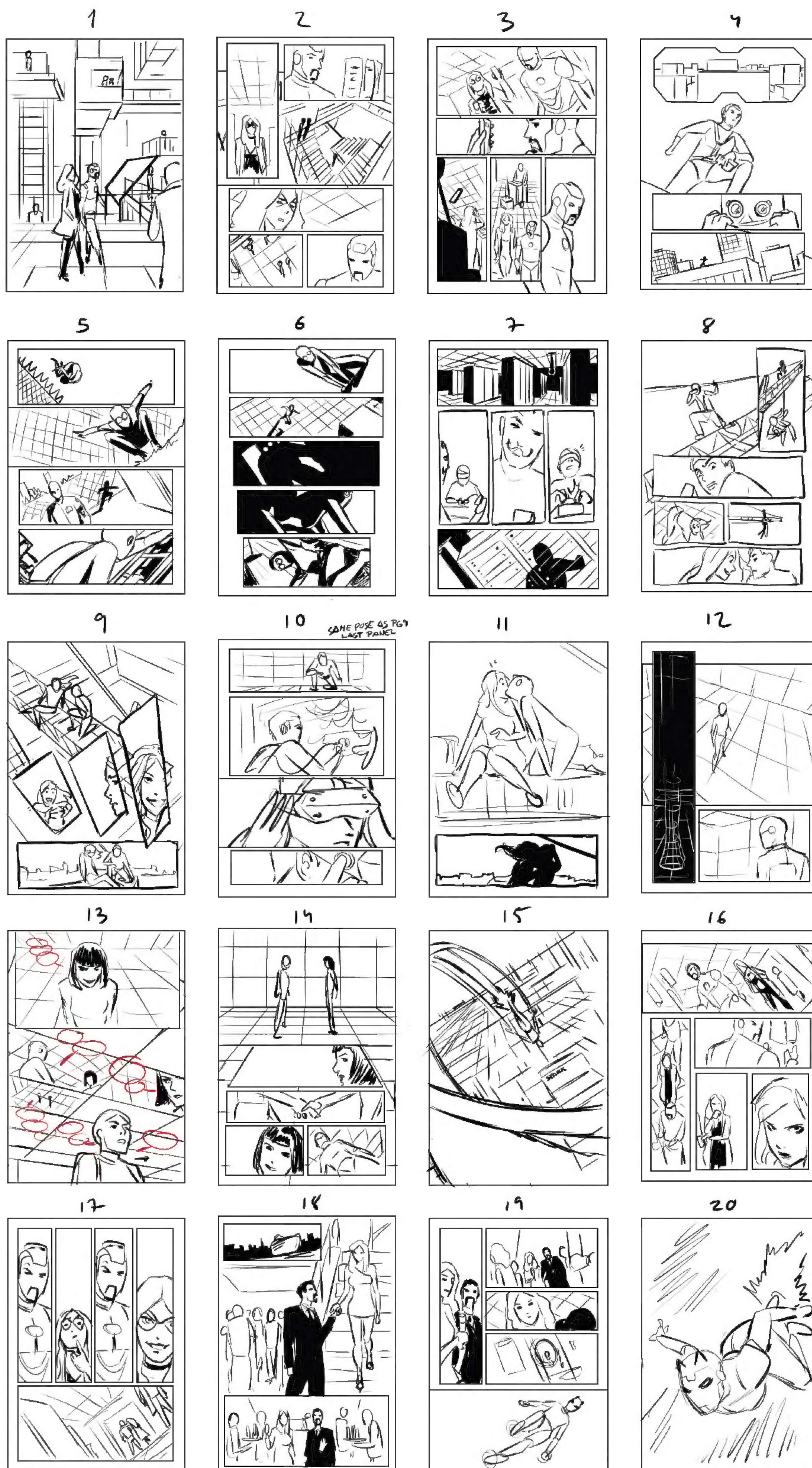
P18



23







A



B



C



D

SLASHES THROUGH
TONY'S ARMOR,
BITS OF IT FLYING



E



F

TONY & SABRETOOTH
FIRE AT IRON CAT



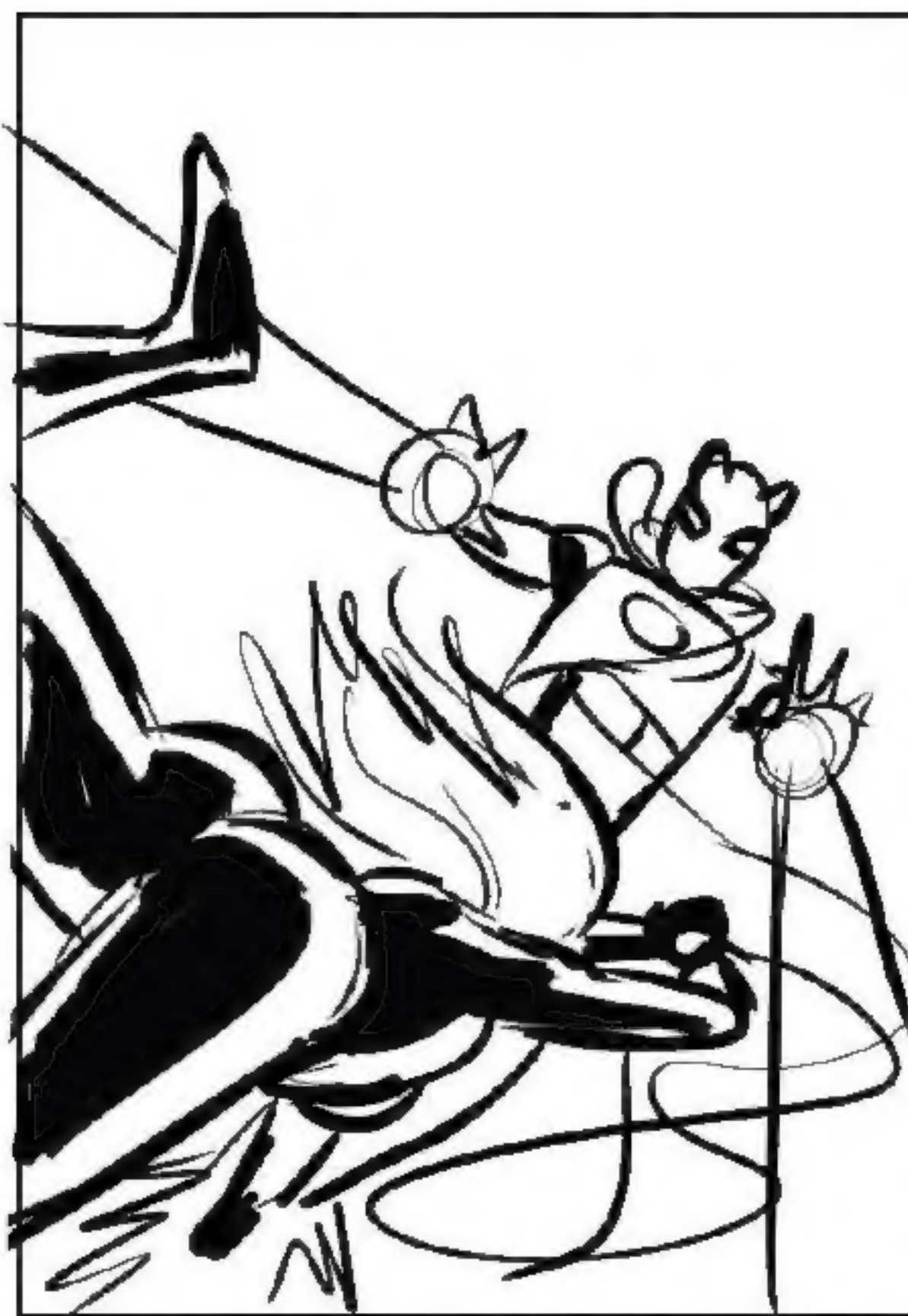
G



B.C. HOLDS I.C.
WITH CABLE

H

MAYBE ADD
TONY IN BG?



I



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THE BLACK CAT

STEALS THE SPOTLIGHT!

Felicia Hardy has a taste for the finer things in life — and a particular set of skills that helps her procure them. But now the world's stealthiest burglar is on the run — not only from the NYPD, but also from the **New York Thieves Guild** and their boss, **Odessa Drake**! Prepare to join the Black Cat and her crew for high-octane heists, thrilling twists and climactic chases across the Marvel Universe! Breaking into **Doctor Strange's** Sanctum Sanctorum? Done. Crossing **Wolverine's** path in Madripoor? Check. Stealing **Tony Stark's** armor? Easy. Proposing marriage to **Spider-Man**? Wait, what?! Plus: The **King in Black** unleashes a symbiote invasion! The **Infinity Stones** are the ultimate score! And the **Iron Cat** takes flight!

COLLECTING **BLACK CAT** (2019) #1-12, **BLACK CAT** (2020) #1-10, **BLACK CAT ANNUAL** (2019) #1, **GIANT-SIZE BLACK CAT: INFINITY SCORE**, **IRON CAT** #1-5, AND MATERIAL FROM **BLACK CAT ANNUAL** (2021) #1 AND **FREE COMIC BOOK DAY 2020 (SPIDER-MAN/ VENOM)** — BY JED MACKAY, NAO FUJI, TRAVEL FOREMAN, MICHAEL DOWLING, DIKE RUAN, ANNIE WU, KRIS ANKA, C.F. VILLA, NINA VAKUEVA, NATACHA BUSTOS, JUAN GEDEON, JOEY VAZQUEZ, PERE PÉREZ, PATRICK GLEASON, BRIAN REBER, FRANK D'ARMATA AND DAVID CURIEL.

T+

MARVEL

